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EDITORIAL PREFACE

> Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honourable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.

No section of the population of India can afford to neglect her ancient heritage. The treasures of knowledge, wisdom, and beauty which are contained in her literature, philosophy, art, and regulated life are too precious to be lost. Every citizen of India needs to use them, if he is to be a cultured modern Indian. This is as true of the Christian, the Muslim, the Zoroastrian as of the Hindu. But, while the heritage of India has been largely explored by scholars, and the results of their toil are laid out for us in books, they cannot be said to be really available for the ordinary man. The volumes are in most cases expensive, and are often technical and difficult. Hence this series of cheap books has been planned by a group of Christian men, in order that every educated Indian, whether rich or poor, may be able to find his way into the treasures of India's past. Many Europeans, both in India and elsewhere, will doubtless be glad to use the series.

The utmost care is being taken by the General Editors in selecting writers, and in passing manuscripts for the press. To every book two tests are rigidly applied: everything must be scholarly, and everything must be sympathetic. The purpose is to bring the best out of the ancient treasuries, so that it may be known, enjoyed, and used.



TRADITIONAL FIGURE OF THE POET

From Pandit K. Vaḍivēlu Cheṭṭiar's Edition. With permission of Author

THE HERITAGE OF INDIA SERIES

THE SACRED KURAL

OR

The Tamil Veda of Tiruvaḷḷuvar

Selected and Translated with
Introduction and Notes

BY

H. A. POPLEY, B.A.
SECRETARY, Y.M.C.A. OF INDIA, BURMA AND CEYLON

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DEDICATED TO

THE

GENEROUS PEOPLE OF THE TAMIL LANDS

WHO WELCOMED ME, A STRANGER, INTO
THEIR MIDST AND OPENED TO ME THEIR
HEARTS AND THEIR TREASURES AND

TO MY OLD FRIEND 'K.T.'

(KANAKARAYAN TIRUSELVAM PAUL)

WHO IN SO MANY WAYS REPRESENTED
THE BEST IN TAMIL LIFE AND CULTURE

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

It was at the suggestion of Dr. J. N. Farquhar and Mr. K. T. Paul that I first undertook to prepare a volume for the Heritage of India Series on *The Sacred Kural*, the ethical Bible of the Tamil people. Ever since I began to study this little book, twenty-eight years ago, it has been with the New Testament my daily companion in all my travels, and I have learnt to love it, and to rejoice in its homely, high-minded teaching. Dr. Farquhar's suggestion, therefore, found an instant response and, although I fully realized my own deficiencies for the task, I regarded it as a great and noble purpose to help to make more widely known the inimitable couplets of this humble Tamil sage.

Many translations of these couplets have been made in English, of which that of the great Tamil scholar, Dr. G. U. Pope, is the best known. Dr. Pope has put them into rhymed verses, a form which has involved in many cases some slight addition to or alteration of the meaning of the original. Many of his renderings, however, are extremely happy and arresting, and I am indebted to them for many ideas and suggestions.

V. V. S. Aiyar, a Tamil scholar, the most recent translator—whose tragic death a few years ago at the *ashram* he established at Ambāsamudram came as a great shock to the Tamil people—has probably produced the best English rendering hitherto. In the Introduction to his book he says, 'After a great deal of thought I have come to the conclusion that the Authorised English version of the Bible is the proper model to be followed. The resemblance of the thought and diction of Tiruvaḷḷuvar to the great master-

pieces of the Bible struck me forcibly, and I thought that if any portion of the vigour of the *Kural* could be presented in English, it could only be by adopting the phraseology and the terms of expression of the English version of the Hebrew and Greek Veda.' V. V. S. Aiyar has certainly succeeded in giving us a very fine translation and I have been indebted to him again and again.

Mrs. Tirunāvukkarasu, a cultured Tamil lady of Jaffna, in her little devotional book entitled *A Gem for Each Day*, has given some exceedingly happy renderings of many of the couplets, to which also I am indebted. With the exception of Mrs. Tirunāvukkarasu, none of the other translators has endeavoured to reproduce the terseness and brevity of the original.

The translations in this book have all been made from the original, with the help of the best commentaries available, and I have tried to reproduce, as far as possible, something of the terseness and brevity of the original. Upon the advice of the Rev. E. C. Dewick, who has succeeded Dr. J. N. Farquhar as Literary Secretary of the Y.M.C.A., I have also tried to give a metrical form to the couplets, but I have not made use of rhyme, as it seems to me to detract from the dignity of the translation. Wherever possible, without doing injustice to the meaning, I have used both vowel and consonant alliteration, which is the Tamil substitute for rhyme.

It is almost impossible in any translation to do justice to the beauty and force of the original; only a master of English and of Tamil, such as Tiruvaḷḷuvar was in Tamil, could do that. The first desideratum has been to get the actual meaning of the couplet as exactly as possible, and then to express it in the fewest and choicest words. I realize that I have failed miserably again and again and can only

hope that those who read this translation may be able to gain at least a glimpse of the inimitable style of the Tamil author.

Fairly full notes have been added so that the reader may be able to understand the literary and local allusions and to enter as completely as possible into the spirit of the poet. In the notes I have also quoted the renderings of other translators, where this seemed desirable.

It has not been possible within the limits of the Heritage of India Series to give a complete translation of the work, nor is it necessary to do so for the non-Tamilian to gain a good idea of the teaching of this book. Those who wish for a complete translation may obtain that of V. V. S. Aiyar.

I have to express my especial indebtedness to the Rev. E. C. Dewick, to my old friend, the late Mr. K. T. Paul, to the Rt. Rev. V. S. Azariah, Bishop of Dornakal and to Pandit G. S. Duraiswamy Pillay for their valuable help in the preparation of this book; and to Mr. Martin S. Lall for his help in typing out the whole manuscript a number of times. I must also pay my tribute of respect and gratitude to my old Tamil tutor, Srīmān Paṇḍit Sivaprasāda Hṛidayam Pillay Avl., who first led my feet into the untrodden paths of Tamil literature in the little town of Erode, where under his guidance for fourteen years, I studied many of the masterpieces of Tamil literature.

In humble devotion I place this work before the sacred feet of my Lord and Master, Jesus Christ, 'the light which enlightens every man.'

Calcutta, H. A. POPLEY.
July, 1931.

Note.—I have not used any diacritical marks for the name of the book itself. It should really be written 'Kuṛaḷ,' the 'r' being strong and the 'l' pronounced by an upward twist of the tongue and slightly guttural. This should be remembered throughout.

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PROPERTY

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Work		Abbreviation
Ancient India, by Dr. S. KRISHNASWĀMY AIYANGĀR	...	*A.I.*
Hindu View of Life, by SIR S. RĀDHAKRISHNAN	...	*H.V.L.*
History of the Tamils, by P. T. SRĪNIVĀS IYENGĀR	...	*H.T.*
Tamil Commentary, by PARIMĒLAḶAGAR ...	...	*Pari.*
The Kural, by REV. J. S. M. HOOPER ...	...	*J.S.M.H.*
The Maxims of Tiruvaḷḷuvar, by V. V. S. AIYAR	...	*V.V.S.*
The Oxford History of India, by VINCENT A. SMITH. 1919	...	*V.S.*
The Sacred Kurral, by DR. G. U. POPE ...	...	*S.K.*
The Tamil Antiquary. A journal published by the Tamil Archæological Society, Trichinopoly from 1909–11	...	*T.A.*
The Tamils Eighteen Hundred Years Ago, by V. KANAKASABHĀBATHI PILLAY	...	*K.S.P.*
Ahanānūṛu	...	*Ahan.*
Bhagavad Gīta	...	*B.G.*
Maṇimēkhalai	...	*Maṇi.*
Naṛṛinai	...	*Naṛ.*
Puṛanānūṛu	...	*Pur.*
Śilappadigāram	...	*Sil.*
Tiruvaḷḷuvamālai	...	*Tiru. Mālai.*

DR. G. U. POPE'S TRIBUTE[1]

Sage Vaḷḷuvar, priest of the lowly clan,
  No tongue repeats, no speech reveals thy name ;
  Yet, all things changing, dieth not thy fame,
For thou art bard of universal man ;

And still thy 'book' above the waters wan,
  Virtue, true wealth, and joy, and being's aim,
  In sweetest mystic couplets doth proclaim,
Where winds sea-wafted palmy forests fan.

Haply undreamed of 'visions' glad thine eyes
  In realms beyond thy fabled 'seven-fold birth',
    And clouds of darkness from thy spirit roll ;

While lands far-off have heard with strange surprise
  Faint echoes of thy song. Through all the earth
    Men hail thee brother, seer of spotless soul.

[1] *S.K.* p. 2.

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

THE AGE, THE POET AND THE BOOK

DATE OF THE *KURAL*

THE dates to be assigned to the earlier Tamil literature are still far from settled; but a great deal of valuable research work has been done during the past quarter of a century by Dr. S. Krishnaswāmy Aiyangār, Srīmān M. Srīnivāsa Aiyangār, Srīmān P. T. Srīnivās Iyengār, Srīmān M. Rāghava Aiyangār, Srīmān K. A. Nīlakantha Śāstri and other scholars, and a large number of epigraphical records have been studied and collated; with the result that much light has been thrown upon the early history of the Tamil people. It is becoming possible to date with some degree of accuracy the most important literary productions of the Tamil country during the first ten centuries of the Christian era. Tamil literature is one of the few vernacular literatures of India which, in the early centuries of this era, attained to a development and a standard that bear comparison with the literature of Sanskrit. Even before the tenth century A.C. the Tamil people had produced great literary masterpieces, and from the tenth to the sixteenth century there was no diminution of output or lowering of the high level attained. This Introduction, however, is not concerned with the later developments of Tamil literature, but only with its early history; for it was during the early centuries of the Christian era that the *Kural* was produced. Tamil is the only living vernacular of India which has a large body of classical literature, written in a language which is still intelligible to educated people and which is no further removed from the modern literary form than mediæval English is from modern English.

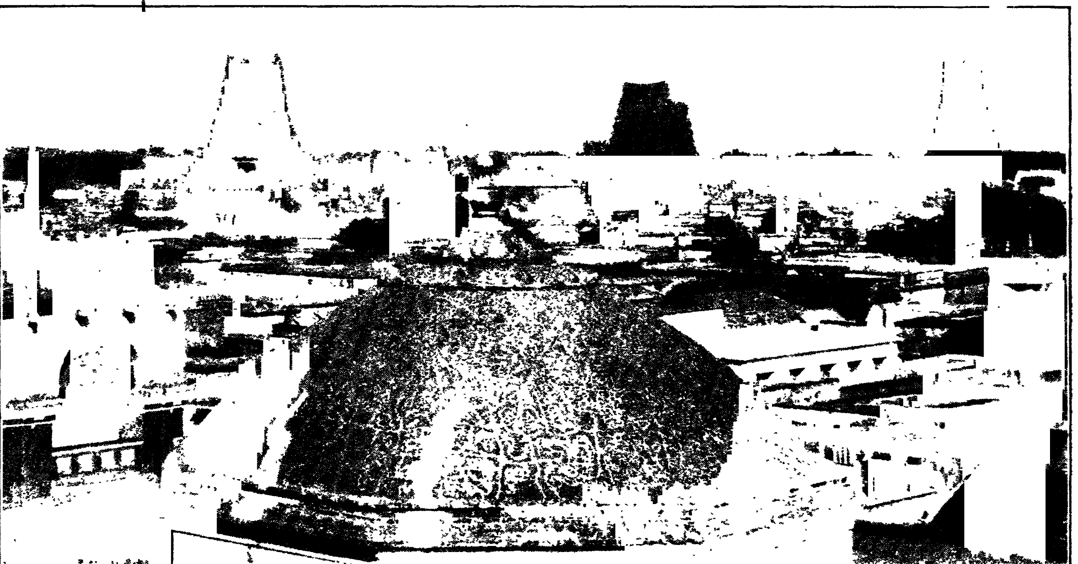
The Tamil people belong to the Dravidian race which in the pre-Christian centuries was found throughout the whole of South India, from the Vindhya mountains on the

north; and perhaps at an earlier period still covered the whole of India. The *Brahui* language, spoken on the borders of Baluchistan, belongs to the Dravidian family; and the recent discoveries at Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro in Sind suggest that three milleniums before Christ the people of Sind were homogeneous in culture with the Dravidians of the Southern Peninsula.

The Tamil people, as they finally became separated from the Āndhras and the Kanaḍas, were the last to be aryanized; and so it is not strange to find among them an earlier literature, which reaches back to the first and second centuries before Christ, and shows very little trace of Aryan influence. Writing was probably introduced into South India in the fifth or sixth century before Christ, so that no body of literature could have existed before that time.

There is an ancient tradition that three Tamil 'Academies' were established at Madura, the capital city of the Pāṇḍyas; and early writers give the most fanciful chronology for these Academies, which were apparently bodies of critical scholars who adjudicated upon all new literary productions. It is not possible to say whether there is any historical truth in this tradition of a Madura Tamil *sangham*, as these Academies were called; but there is no doubt that the dates given by former scholars are quite untenable.

We have abundant evidence from the *Mahābhārata*, *Rāmāyaṇa*, and other early Sanskrit works, as well as from Greek and Latin writers, that in the pre-Christian millenium the Tamils were a cultured, vigorous people, doing an extensive trade with the West, as well as with other parts of India, and affording a welcome hospitality to Aryan immigrants from the north. Aromatics and spices, jewels and cotton cloth were regular articles of trade exported from Southern India to Egypt, Greece and Rome. The Arabs and Greeks seem to have been the intermediaries in this trade. The three Tamil kingdoms of the Choḷas, Sēras and Pāṇḍyas were well-known to many Aryan and European authors of the millenium before Christ. The edicts of Aśoka refer to these kingdoms as 'neighbours,' thus implying that they were not part of his empire (see Edict II); and Aśoka says



CITY OF MADURA AND MĪNĀKSHĪ TEMPLE

that the *Dharma*, i.e. the Buddhist religion, has been established among the peoples of these kingdoms (Edict XIII). The Greeks, who were the greatest intermediaries in the trade of India with Europe, borrowed many Tamil names, which have found their way into most of the European languages. Among these are the Greek words *oryza* from the Tamil *arisi*, rice; *kārpion* from *karuvā*, cinnamon; *ziggiberos* from *injivēr*, ginger; *peperi* from *pippāli*, pepper; *beryllos* from *vaidurya*, beryl and so on.[1] In 20 B.C. the Pāṇḍyan king is said to have sent a commercial mission to the Emperor Augustus[2], and it is stated that the trade between South India and Rome reached the enormous value of one million pounds a year in the early years of the Christian era. Says Vincent Smith: 'The Tamil States of the far South became wealthy and prosperous in virtue of their valuable foreign trade, and attained a high degree of material civilisation at an early period.'[3]

The earliest extant work in Tamil is the *Tolkāppiyam*, a grammar of the Tamil language and literature, written by Trinadhūmāgni, usually called Tolkāppiyanār from his book. He was a Brahman settler among the Tamils and a disciple of Agattiyanār, another Brahman who had written a grammar before him. The grammar of Agattiyanār, which was called *Agattiyam*, is not now extant, but the author of the *Tolkāppiyam* quotes frequently from it, and so we can form some idea of it.

The *Tolkāppiyam* shows a language highly developed, but very different from Sanskrit, and possessing a considerable body of literature in the form of poetry. The *Tolkāppiyam* itself is in a poetical form, and not only gives an account of the grammar of letters and words and sentences, but also of the subject-matter of Tamil literature, which was very different from that of Sanskrit. The latter part of this monumental work, called *Poruḷadigāram*, gives a complete picture of the life of the Tamil people at the time of the author. They were divided according to the regions

[1] *V.S.* p. 194. [2] ibid. p. 143.
[3] ibid. p. 144. cf. also *Cambridge History of India*, vol. I, p. 594.

they inhabited, into hunting tribes, desert dwellers, herdsmen, fisher-folk and cultivators. Each of these classes had its own peculiar poetry and social customs, and these are all graphically described. The poetry of the early Tamils had very little to do with religion and was almost entirely concerned with matters of war and love, which were called respectively *puṛam* and *aham*, and so the early ballads of the Tamils which are extant to-day deal mostly with these aspects of life. They give many glimpses also of the every-day occupations and habits of the men and women of the Tamil land. We shall have something to say of these a little further on.

The importance of the *Tolkāppiyam* for the *Kural* lies in the fact that it is the first Tamil literary work for which a date can be found, and the date of the *Kural* depends to some extent upon the date fixed for the *Tolkāppiyam.* It has been the custom hitherto to date the *Tolkāppiyam* in the third or second century before Christ. Recent scholars however have brought it later to the first century before Christ; and this has been the generally accepted date for some time. Srīmān P. T. Srīnivās Iyengār in his recent brilliant work, *The History of the Tamils*, gives strong reasons for fixing the first century of our present era as the date of the *Tolkāppiyam.*[1] All that can be said here is that it was probably produced between 100 B.C. and A.C. 100. This fixes the anterior limit for the date of the *Kural*, as it is evident for many reasons that the *Kural* must have come after the *Tolkāppiyam.*

It is not so easy however to get a posterior limit for the date of the *Kural*. Dr. Pope dated it between A.C. 800–1000, but in his time there had been very little research into literary and epigraphical data and such a late date is now quite untenable. V. V. S. Aiyar dated it between A.C. 100 and A.C. 300.[2]

The *Kural* itself contains no historical or chronological hint that would help us to date it, and the traditional life of the author has no historical foundation to help us. So we are forced to depend entirely upon quotations in other

[1] *H.T.* p. 216. [2] *V.V.S.* p. ix.

works and upon its general style and subject matter. The early Tamils never realised the trouble they would be giving to their successors when they left out every indication which could help to date a work. It never occurred to them that the date of a book would be regarded as of such great importance by subsequent generations.)

The earliest quotation from the *Kural* seems to be contained in the *Puṛanāṉūṛu*, a collection of ballads by many different poets of various dates, ranging from the first century before Christ to the fourth or fifth century after Christ. Most scholars have regarded the *Puṛanāṉūṛu* collection as having been made about the third or fourth century A.C., but Mr. P. T. Srīnivās Iyengār in his disturbing book now puts the date much later. The quotation occurs in *Puṛam* 34 and reads as follows:

செய்தி கொன்றார்க் குய்தி யில்லென
அறம் பாடிற்றே

—*Puṛ.* 34 : 6, 7.

which may be translated:

The Dharma says: 'There is no escape for those who kill a kindness done' i.e. by means of ingratitude.

This is certainly a reminiscence, and probably a direct quotation, of *Kural* 11 : 10. The colophon to this ballad says that it was composed by Ālathūrkiḻār in honour of Killivaḷavan, (the Choḷa king) 'who died at Kulamuṛṛam.' Unfortunately we cannot date any of these with certainty, even if the colophons themselves may be accepted as historical.

The next ballad also (No. 35) seems to contain a line reminiscent of two couplets in the second chapter of the *Kural*—'The Rain-Cloud's Excellence.' The line reads:

மாரி பொய்ப்பினும் வாரி குன்றினும்

Though the clouds deceive and the flood fails.
(vide *Kural* 2 : 3, 4.[1])

The ballads of the *Puṛanāṉūṛu* cannot be later than the sixth century A.C. and are probably a good deal earlier, so that if these are genuine quotations, the sixth century A.C.

[1] vide p. 38.

must be regarded as the posterior limit for the production of the *Kural*.

The *Śilappadigāram* is the earliest Tamil epic poem extant. Dr. S. Krishnaswāmy Aiyangār places this work in the second century after Christ;[1] but Mr. P. T. Srīnivās Iyengār, for various reasons, which space forbids us to examine here, places it at the end of the fifth century.[2] This work contains what seem to be two clear quotations from the *Kural*. They are as follows:

(*a*) தெய்வந் தொழாஅள் கொழுநற் றொழுவாளைத்
தெய்வந் தொழுந் தகைமை திண்ணமால்

—*Śil*. 23.

It is sure that the quality of worshipping God belongs to her who worships her husband, though she worships no other god. (vide *Kural*, 6 : 5.)

(*b*) முற்பகற் செய்தான் பிறன்கேடு தன்கேடு
பிற்பகற் காண்குறூஉம் பெற்றி காண்

—*Śil*. 21 : 3, 4.

See the ruinous condition which comes upon that man in the evening, who in the morning plans another's ruin. (vide *Kural*, 32 : 9.)

These two follow the *Kural* couplets so closely in form and language that they can hardly be explained, except as quotations from that work.

The *Maṇimēkhalai* is a sequel to the *Śilappadigāram* and has a quotation from the *Kural* about which there can be no doubt whatever. It reads:

தெய்வந் தொழாஅள் கொழுநற் றொழுதெழுவாள்
பெய்யெனப் பெய்யுமழை யென்ற அப்
பொய்யில் புலவன் பொருளுரை தேறாய்

—*Maṇi*. 22 : 59–61.

Study well the pithy saying of the poet who uttered nothing false, and said: 'Who, in waking, bows before her spouse, but before no other god, may ask for rain and rain it will.' (vide *Kural* 6 : 5.)

The name given to the poet in these lines, 'the poet who uttered nothing false,' has stuck to him ever since, and may have also been used in common parlance before that date.

Srīmān S. Sōmasundra Bhārati, in a little pamphlet on Tiruvaḷḷuvar, published in 1928, has brought together a

[1] *A.I.* pp. 373–84. [2] *H.T.* pp. 602, 603.

large number of apparent quotations from the *Kural* in various works of the so-called Sangham era.

It is clear from the above that the date of the *Kural* is still open to considerable question, and cannot be settled until the dates of other literature of the period A.C. 1–500 have been fixed. All that we can say with certainty is that it must lie somewhere between the second and the sixth centuries A.C. The style and subject matter make it clear beyond doubt that it must have preceded the age of sectarian revival which began in the seventh century. The majority of Tamil scholars still regard it as a second century work; but it is likely that the arguments of Mr. P. T. Srīnivās Iyengār will lead some of them to put it later. It is very doubtful if it should be put as late as the sixth century, as he believes, on grounds which depend largely upon subjective analysis. In spite of the very great weight to be attached to Mr. Srīnivās Iyengār's opinions, in view of his wide researches into South Indian history, I am inclined to place the *Kural* not later than the fourth century A.C., judging by its style and the frequency of quotation in works which belong to the sixth century. Probably however, this is a matter which will never be satisfactorily settled; and fortunately the value of the work does not depend upon whether it was composed in the second or the sixth century. It will always be one of the literary treasures of the Tamil people.

SOUTH INDIA IN THE DAYS OF TIRUVAḶḶUVAR

The uncertainty of date will not markedly affect our conception of the conditions of the Tamil country in the days of our author, because the literature describing that period, whatever it may be, belongs to the same time as Tiruvaḷḷuvar. We may think of the period as reaching from the second to the fifth century A.C. There is an extensive literature describing the life of the people and the state of the country during these centuries. It is all written in poetical form in the somewhat archaic style of those days, and requires commentaries if the modern reader is to understand it properly.

It is evident that the civilization of the south was in its essentials a Dravidian civilization, into which Aryan elements were then only slowly penetrating. The *varnāśrama* system of caste had not been adopted by the Tamils, but the people were classified in accordance with the regions they inhabited and the occupations they followed. Says Mr. P. T. Srīnivās Iyengār:

Notwithstanding the existence in their midst of Brahmanas and the attempts of Agattiyanār and Tolkāppiyanār to import Aryan culture into the Tamil country, the bulk of the people continued to live as if Aryan culture did not exist. They lived and loved just in the same ways as their forebears did in the olden times. Their occupations, customs, and beliefs, superstitious or otherwise, did not at all alter. . . . The simple rural life of the pre-Christian centuries continued intact and, notwithstanding its contact with Sanskrit culture, the Tamil muse still sought inspiration from the humble scenes around, which it deserted a few centuries later when the artificial poetry of Sanskrit subjugated the Tamil mind and for all time destroyed the beautiful realistic poetry of the early Tamils.[1]

One or two quotations from the poetry of the period will show the Tamil people's love of nature, their freedom from the conventions of Sanskrit literature and their exuberant interest in the everyday things of life:

The dwellers of the hill country were loth to part from it, because from bough to bough are hanging the honey-combs, large fruits are ripening in bunches, bright rivulets are running down the hill looking like garlands, on the hill-sides are being raised various kinds of grains and pulses all the year round and the mountainous country is very fertile.[2]—*Naṛ.* 93 : 1–5.

The broad leaves of the lily growing near the rivulet caught by the long vine of the cane, which grows near the banks of the tank and has small thorns like the surface of a rasp, are moved by the fitful gusts of the north wind, and look like the bellows which are blown in the smithy and grow tense and lax alternately.[3]—*Ahan.* 96: 3–7.

The following quotation illustrates their early love for and interest in the sea, and incidentally shows that the Tamil land had found a place for the harlot:

As when the wind grows strong and the storm beats, the ship is upset and the terrified crew fall down and many men seize one plank, so my friend, in the street where the small, beautiful *yāḻ*[4] is humming

[1] *H.T.* p. 253.
[2] ibid. p. 255.
[3] ibid. p. 268.
[4] An ancient lute.

like the fair bee, the bejewelled harlots, who once had possession of your heart and are shedding hot tears because you have deserted them, catch hold of you and are pulling you in different directions. I have seen with my eyes this your distress; but how can I help you?[1] —*Naṛ*. 30.

During these centuries the Tamil land was divided into three important kingdoms, the Choḷa, Sēra and Pāṇḍya kingdoms, to whom many petty chieftains gave nominal adherence or paid tribute. The Choḷa capital was at Uṛaiyūr (now Trichinopoly), the Sēra capital at Karūr on the west coast, and the Pāṇḍya capital at Madura. The following ode from the *Puṛanāṉūṛu* gives a poetical description of the Tamil country:

The pleasant Tamil lands possess
For boundary, the ocean wide. This land
Three kings with mighty hosts
Divide; but of the three, whose drums
Sound for the battle's angry strife,
Thou art the chief, O mighty one.
Though the resplendent sun in diverse quarters rise,
And though the silvery planet to the south decline,
Thy land shall flourish, where through channels deep,
Kāveri flows with bright refreshing stream;
Along whose banks the sweet canes' white flowers wave
Like pennoned spears uprising from the plain.[2]

—*Puṛ*. 35.

The poets were usually to be found at the courts of the kings and chiefs, to whom they acted as counsellors and laudators. Kapilār, one of the earliest of the Aryan poets, thus addresses Kāri, a petty chieftain:

Where reigns one Lord, men's longing eyes are bent;
From quarters four they come, in gain intent.
'Tis hard to measure worth; thy gifts to fling
Abroad with lavish hand is easier thing.
O king munificent! full well
Thou knowest the very truth I tell.
Cease then to view each suppliant bard
With undistinguishing regard.'[3]

—*Puṛ*. 121.

Another poet, who is nameless, addresses a Pāṇḍyan king as follows:

[1] H.T. p. 299. [2] *T.A.* vol. I, No. 6, p. 50. [3] ibid. p. 64.

Therefore, O Celiyan, great in war, despise this not;
Increase the reservoirs for water made.
Who bind the water and supply to fields
Their measured flow, these bind
The earth to them. The fame of others passes swift away![1]
—*Pur*. 18.

Cattle-raiding was one of the favourite pastimes of the braves of those days and is picturesquely recorded in many of these ballads.

Youthful warrior, who bearest the wondrous three-pronged dart, go forth, seize and bring home the herds of cattle with the bulls, their leaders! See the foes bending their bows, as though they would cut down whole forests and set them on fire, and inspecting their arrows as they fit them to the string. Put their ranks to flight.[2]
—*Purapporul Venbā Mālai*.

The three great chiefs were frequently at war with one another or with their neighbours for some outlying territory, and martial heroism was highly esteemed, as the following ballad bears witness:

Our heart ceases at this dame's great courage:
Well may she merit her ancient age.
In a former war, her father it was
Who, killed by an elephant, died in the field.
It was in the other day's battle, her husband
Fell overpowered by numerous hosts;
And now to-day at the beat of drum,
Delighted and yet how sad was she, this woman with an only son.
She lovingly oiled and combed his hair,
Gave him his spear and bade him seek the battlefield.[3]
—*Pur*. 279.

At the same time there were great towns and ports both on the east and the west coast that did a flourishing trade with outside countries. Muśiri (now Cranganore) had for centuries a large trade with the west by way of Aden and the Arabian peninsula. Puhār or Kāveripūmpaṭṭinam was a great Choḷa port at the mouth of the Kāveri and Kanakasabhābathi Pillay in his book, *The Tamils Eighteen Hundred Years Ago*, gives a vivid description of this port town, culled from the literature of that time:

[1] *T.A*. vol. I, No. 6, p. 48. [2] ibid. p. 5. [3] ibid. p. 34.

The town was divided into two parts, one of which was called Maruvūr-Pākkam and adjoined the sea coast, and the other, which was situated to the west of it, was called Paṭṭinappākkam. Between these two portions of the city was a large area of open ground, planted with trees at regular intervals, where the great market was held. The principal streets at Paṭṭinappākkam were the Royal Street, the Car Street and the Bazaar Street. The merchants, Brahmins, farmers, doctors and astrologers resided in separate streets. Surrounding the palace were the houses of the charioteers, horse and elephant riders and soldiers who formed the bodyguard of the king. Bards, minstrels and panegyrists, actors, musicians and buffoons, chank-cutters and those skilled in making flower garlands and strings of pearls, time-keepers whose duty it was to cry out the number of each *nāḻikai*, or division of time, as it passes, and other servants of the palace, also resided within the limits of Paṭṭinappākkam. Near the beach in Maruvūr-Pākkam were raised platforms and godowns and warehouses with windows shaped like the eyes of the deer, where the goods landed from ships were stored. Here the goods were stamped with the tiger-stamp (the emblem of the Choḷa kings) after payment of customs duty, and passed on to the merchants' warehouses. Close by were the settlements of the Yavana[1] merchants, where many attractive articles were always exposed for sale. Here were also the quarters of foreign traders who had come from beyond the seas, and who spoke various tongues. Vendors of fragrant pastes and powders, of flowers and incense, tailors who worked on silk, wool or cotton, traders in sandal, aghil, coral, pearls, gold and precious stones, grain merchants, washermen, dealers in fish and salt, butchers, blacksmiths, braziers, carpenters, coppersmiths, painters, sculptors, goldsmiths, cobblers and toy-makers, had their habitation in Maruvūr-Pākkam.[2]

It is clear that the civilization of the cultured Tamils of the towns and cities was wide and tolerant and not like that of the Chinese and Japanese, restrictive and exclusive in its outlook. There was probably a Roman colony in Madura, as the large discoveries of Roman coins suggest.[3]

One of the wandering bards of that day expresses this tolerance and adaptability in the following ode:

> To us all towns are one, all men are kin,
> Life's good comes not from other's gift, nor ill;
> Man's pains and pain's reliefs are from within.
> Death's no new thing; nor do our bosoms thrill
> When joyous life seems like a luxurious draught.
> When grieved, we patient suffer; for we deem
> This much-praised life of ours a fragile raft
> Borne down the waters of some mountain stream,

[1] Greek or Roman. [2] *K.S.P.* p. 25. [3] *H.T.* p. 311.

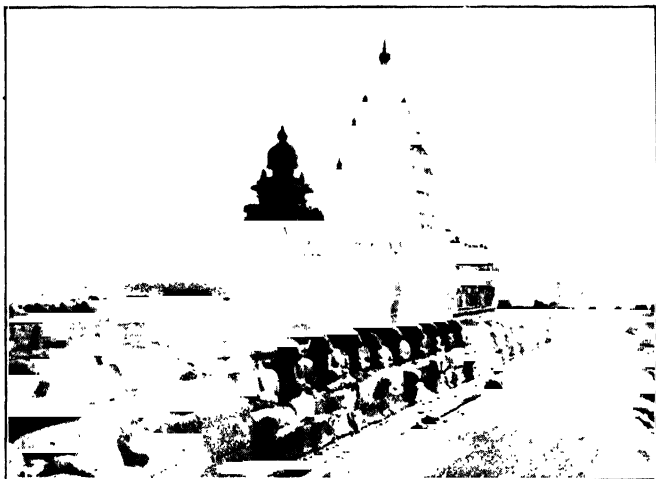
That o'er huge boulders roaring sëeks the plain.
Tho' storms, with lightning's flash, from darkened skies
Descend, the raft goes on as fates ordain.
Thus have we seen in visions of the wise.
We marvel not at greatness of the great;
Still less despise we men of low estate.[1]

—*Pur.* 192.

The poems in the early anthologies bear witness to the extent of this culture, which had permeated all sections of the population. Of one hundred and ninety-two poets, said to belong to the period of the third Sangham, whose positions and occupations can be traced, fifty-seven were Vellāḷars or agriculturists, thirty-six were women, twenty-nine were Brahmans, seventeen were Nāgar or hillmen, thirteen were Yeyinar or foresters, seven were Kammāḷar or herdsmen, seven were Vaṇigar or merchants, seven were Maḷḷar or agricultural labourers, thirteen were Pāṇḍyan kings, seven were Sēra kings, and one each a shepherd (Āyar), a potter and a fisherman. The fact that these various poets were considered worthy of a place in one or other of these anthologies suggests that in all these classes there must have been a fairly wide extent of education and culture.

It is also clear that there was a genuine tolerance in religious matters. The indigenous Tamil religions were largely concerned with ritual dancing and singing to instrumental accompaniment, but Aryan religious influences were gradually making their way in the south. Buddhist *vihāras* and Jain temples were to be found, together with temples to Aryan and Dravidian gods and goddesses. There is reason to believe that at this period there was a Christian community at Mayilāpūr, which was then a small seaside town just a few miles to the north of Mahāballipuram (one of the flourishing ports of the Choḷa and Pallava kingdoms, and to-day a suburb of Madras, where the Cathedral of St. Thomas stands, beneath which the saint is said to have been buried). Kāñchī (Conjeevaram) was evidently an important centre of Aryan culture. This was the capital of the Pallava kingdom from about the second century until it was captured in the middle of the fourth

[1] *T.A.* vol. I, No. 6, p. 45.



THE SHORE TEMPLE AT MAHĀBALLIPURAM

Photo by Rev. E. C. Dewick



DHARMA'S RATHA AT MAHĀBALLIPURAM (ROCK CARVED)

Photo by Rev. E. C Dewick

century A.C. by Karikāla Choḷan, one of the greatest of the early Choḷa sovereigns. Well-known Aryan scholars were living there, and it is said to have been the birth-place of Chāṇakya (Kautilya), the chief minister of Chandragupta and the author of the *Arthaśāstra.* From Kāñchī, Aryan ideas and customs were gradually making their influence felt through the Tamil country. It is stated by Sir John Marshall that the rich decorative ideas of Dravidian architecture had already begun to influence the architecture of North India. The frescoes which have been discovered at Sīttanavāsal hill in the Pudukottah State show a striking similarity to the Buddhist frescoes of Ajanta, revealing the same boldness of form and a similar feeling for beauty and colour.

THE POET TIRUVAḶḶUVAR

It was into such an age, rich in culture, vivid in its life and adventurous in its commerce, and into a people with a great literary heritage and a tradition of generous tolerance for all that was useful and noble, that the author of the *Kural* was born. He lived before epigraphical records begin, and beyond what can be gathered from fanciful legends we know almost nothing about him or his family. No genuine historical record has yet been found concerning his origin or his life. Dr. Pope thus greets him in his memorial verses:

> Sage Vaḷḷuvar, priest of the lowly clan,
> No tongue repeats, no speech reveals thy name ;
> Yet all things changing, dieth not thy fame,
> For thou art bard of universal man.

Tradition tells us that he was a weaver of the little town of Mayilāpūr[1]—'the Village of the Peacock'—and this may perhaps record the truth. For this reason he is often called 'the Weaver of Mayilāpūr.' He was said to have belonged to a low caste, the caste of Vaḷḷuvars, who were then, and are still, the priests of the outcaste groups, and so he has been known from time immemorial, as Tiruvaḷḷuvar or Sage

[1] To-day it is spelt 'Mylapore.'

Vaḷḷuvar. Tradition makes him out to have been one of a family of seven, born of an illegitimate union between a Brahman and an outcaste woman, among the others being the poets Kapilār and Avvaiyār; but there is absolutely no evidence for the truth of this tradition, nor does it appear until very late; so we can discard it without regret, as well as many more fanciful tales of his life. One of the stanzas in praise of his book says that he was born in Madura and came to live in Mayilāpūr. Another of the laudatory stanzas says that Ēlēlasingan (Lion of the Surf), an owner of surf-boats, which were used up to the beginning of this century for communication between ships and shore at Madras, was his patron and brought him up. His frequent references to the 'sea-girt world' and 'the fearful ocean' suggest that he lived by the sea; and so it is possible that the tradition which connects him with Mayilāpūr is founded on fact. To-day in Mayilāpūr there is a shrine to the poet and his wife, set in the midst of a beautiful garden. It lies in the heart of the Brahman quarter and within sound of the waves that were so often in his thoughts. Every year in the month of April a festival is celebrated in his honour and he is worshipped as a divine guru.

In the early centuries of the Christian era, Mayilāpūr may have been a busy cosmopolitan port with merchants and weavers, fisher-folk and agriculturists. There may also have been there a small community of Christians, if the tradition which connects St. Thomas with the neighbourhood is historical. There was certainly a shrine of St. Thomas there in the tenth century, as King Alfred is said to have sent an embassy to the shrine of St. Thomas in South India. It is known from Tamil records that Mahāballipuram, which lies twenty miles to the south, was a flourishing Pallava and Choḷa port in the early centuries A.C., and its wonderful carved temples of the seventh to the ninth centuries bear witness to its importance.

It is clear that our poet would have plenty of opportunity of talking with people from overseas, and of getting to know something of different cultures and religions. There were Jains and Buddhists, Vedic Hindus and Āgamic Hindus, as well as Dravidians, living and worshipping in



MYLAPORE TODAY

Photo by Messrs Klein & Peyerl

peace and harmony. Sectarian bitterness had not then arisen and the various sects lived happily together in a peaceful tolerance and mutual respect. It was not till the seventh century that the age of sectarian rivalry began in the Tamil country. Kāñchī (Conjeevaram) was only a few miles away from Mayilāpūr.

Srīmān S. Sōmasundra Bhārati of Madura has recently published a pamphlet on Tiruvaḷḷuvar, in which he maintains that the poet was a Tamil chieftain who held a position corresponding to that of Lord Chamberlain in the court of the Pāṇḍyan king at Madura. He brings forward evidence to show that the name 'Vaḷḷuvar' was used in those days as a title for a high official at the court. While Srīmān Bhārati has given good reasons for refusing to believe the old stories, it is hardly possible without further confirmation to accept his hypothesis, and to throw overboard the tradition that connects Tiruvaḷḷuvar with the humbler classes.

Tiruvaḷḷuvar is said to have married a Veḷḷāḷa woman named Vāśuki, who died before him. About their married life all kinds of fanciful stories are related, which however belong to a later time. Most of them illustrate her complete absorption in, and subordination to, her husband, and at her death the following stanza is put into his mouth:

> Sweet as my daily food: O full of love: O wife
> Obedient ever to my word, chafing my feet,
> The last to sleep, the first to rise, O gentle one:
> By night henceforth, what slumber to mine eyes?[1]

If we could by any stretch of imagination believe that this verse was actually composed by the poet, then judging even according to the standards of that day and in the light of his own estimate of the place of women, we should be forced to think of Tiruvaḷḷuvar as a selfish and arrogant individual, rather than as the shrewd, kindly and humble soul that shines out of the pages of his book.

Tradition says that Tiruvaḷḷuvar submitted his manuscript to the haughty paṇḍits of the Madura Academy and that they refused to accept it, scorning the work of an

[1] *S.K.* p. xii.

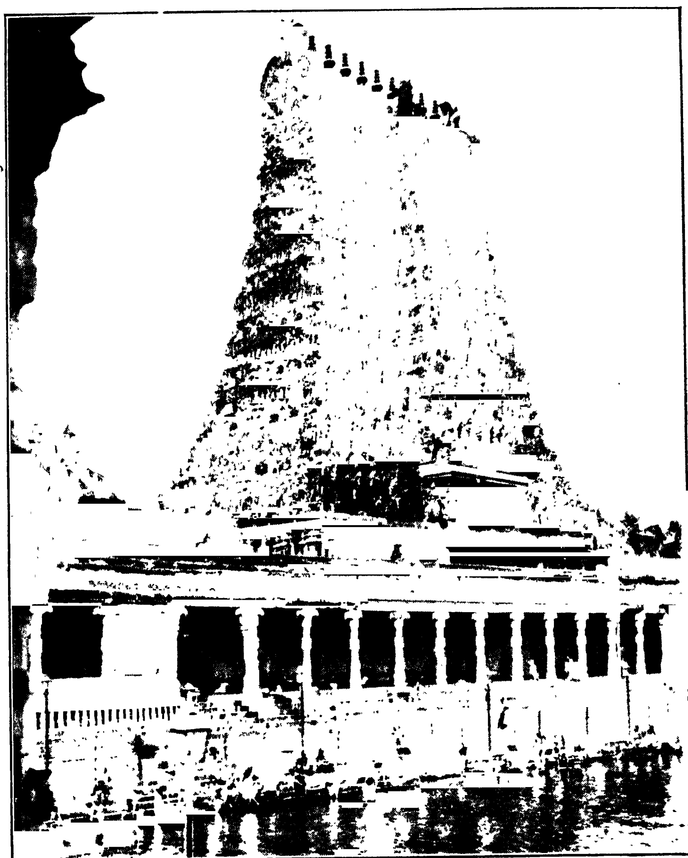
unlearned man of the lower orders. Tiruvaḷḷuvar, however, placed it upon the raft which floated in the Golden Lily Tank of the temple and upon which the Board of the Academy sat. Immediately the raft shrank to such a small size that it could only provide room for this palmyra leaf manuscript, and the learned paṇḍits were all precipitated ignominiously into the water—an incident that must have rejoiced the hearts of other poets whose manuscripts had been rejected! Realizing through this miracle the divine worth of the book, each of them sang a stanza in honour of the work and its author. These stanzas are called 'The Garland of Tiruvaḷḷuvar,' (திருவள்ளுவமாலை) and are usually included in editions of the book as an appendix. This legend probably enshrines the fact that the poet, being unknown and of somewhat lowly origin, had difficulty in persuading the literary critics of the ancient Tamil world that his book contained anything worth while; and that in some striking fashion, perhaps through the king, the value of the work was made known. Traditions of this nature are usually valuable, not so much for the story they tell, as for the idea they convey. Srīmān P. T. Srīnivās Iyengār suggests that Madura refused to recognize him because he came from the unknown Pallava country, which was more Aryan than Tamil, and which had not produced one single Tamil poet of merit up to that time.

The following are a few of the laudatory stanzas from the *Tiruvaḷḷuvamālai*; one of these is ascribed to the Pāṇḍyan king of that date—Ugra-Peruvaḷudhi—and runs thus:

> நான்மறையின் மெய்ப்பொருளை முப்பொருளா நான்முகத்தோன்
> தான்மறைந்து வள்ளுவனாய்த் தந்துரைத்த—நூன்முறையை
> வந்திக்க சென்னி, வாய் வாழ்த்துக, நன்னெஞ்சஞ்
> சிந்திக்கக், கேட்கச் செவி.
>
> —*Tiru. Mālai*, 4.

The god Brahma, hiding his own true form, was born into the world as Vaḷḷuvar, who took the three categories of the Vedas—Virtue, Wealth and Bliss—and expressed them in the form of the *Kural*; therefore let my head worship this book, let my mouth praise it, let my mind ponder on it and let my ears listen to it.

To Sāttanār, another poet of the day, is ascribed the following stanza:



THE GOLDEN LILY TANK, MADURA TEMPLE

ஆரியமுஞ் செந்தமிழும் ஆராய்ந்து இதனினிது
சீரியதென் றொன்றைச் செப்பரிதால்;—ஆரியம்
வேதமுடைத்து, தமிழ் திருவள்ளுவனார்
ஓது குறட்பா வுடைத்து.

—*Tiru. Mālai*, 43.

It is difficult to say which of the two is superior, Sanskrit or Tamil; For Sanskrit has the *Vedas* and Tamil has the *Kural* of Tiruvaḷḷuvar.

Iḍaikkāḍar, another of the poets, puts the opinion of the Tamil world into a nutshell in the following stanza:

கடுகைத் துளைத்தேழ் கடலைப் புகட்டிக்
குறுகத் தறித்த குறள்.

The *Kural* is a semi-perforated mustard seed, into which the poet has poured the contents of the seven seas.

Kapilār, a Brahman poet, and pre-eminent in that day for humanity and wisdom, is credited with the following stanza:

தினையளவு போதாச் சிறுபுன்னீர் நீண்ட
பனையளவு காட்டும் படித்தால்—மனையளகு
வள்ளைக் குறங்கும் வளநாட, வள்ளுவனார்
வெள்ளைக் குறட்பா விரி.

—*Tiru. Mālai*, 5.

O king, who rules over the land where tame birds fall asleep to the music of the rice-pounders! The wonder of the thought contained in one of Vaḷḷuvar's little verses is similar to the drop of water on the tip of the tiniest flower, which reflects the whole length of the tallest palmyra tree.

These stanzas testify to the very high value placed upon the book by the Tamil people in former days.

THE CHARACTER OF THE POET

The only light we possess on the character of the poet is that which comes from the book itself; and so it is to that we must turn in order to understand him. The *Kural* shows him to be a man of the people, with simple tastes, of sturdy honesty, self-reliant, god-fearing and gifted with a sense of pawky humour. He loved the simple home-life of the worker, whether weaver or tiller of the soil, and was at home with little children. The greatest virtues to his mind were simple kindliness, truthfulness, sincerity and harmlessness to all life. He was not in any sense an ascetic, but a shrewd man of the world, and knew that many so-

called ascetics were imposters and rogues. He was a keen observer of nature and of the habits of birds and animals, and used simple illustrations with telling effect. To him there was only one God, the Supporter and Helper of all who trust Him, the all-perfect One, Who alone gives joy and rest. Idol-worship finds no place in his book, and there is no mention of any of the sects. He has taken the best of Hinduism as he knew it, of Buddhism, and perhaps also of Christian ideas, and woven them together into a strand of beautiful pearls. Open-minded and open-hearted, he is ready to welcome all truth wherever found, and no mocking laugh or abusive taunt against any religion issues from his pages. All the great religions of India—Śaivism, Buddhism, Jainism and Christianity—have claimed him as their own. The likelihood is that he belonged to no particular sect, but worked out, from his own experience, in the quiet of Mayilāpūr, as he wove his many coloured fabrics, a synthesis of the best he could find in all of them. His scorn is reserved only for laziness and hypocrisy—an interesting combination. A dry-as-dust philosopher, who had not entered deeply into the everyday experiences of life, could not have painted these simple and beautiful pictures; an essentially human soul, with vivid human interests and in daily touch with the ordinary things of life, lies behind these imperishable stanzas. We will just cull a few illustrations of the dry humour and vivid picture-making which we find in so many of his stanzas.

> ' The flute is sweet, the lute is sweet ' say those
> Who've never heard the pretty prattle of their little ones. (7 : 6.)

> Lakshmī herself the envious cannot bear;
> She'll show him to her sister sinister and go. (17 : 7.)

> Call him not ' man ' who makes display of useless words;
> Call him but ' chaff of humankind.' (20 : 6.)

> The show of power of one, who has no power within,
> Is like a cow in tiger-skin which quietly grazes on. (27 : 3.)

> Be like the heron when 'tis time for lying low;
> But like its strike when time for action comes. (49 : 10.)

> The deeds of men of shameless heart
> Like puppets are on strings, just apeing life. (102 : 10.)

When eye to eye doth speak with answering look,
What need is there for any spoken words? (110 : 10.)

Those who wish for more will find them in the translations given in this little book. A nameless author and a nameless book; but his kindly, generous soul speaks to us from every stanza.

THE BOOK

THE IDEALS AND TEACHING OF THE 'KURAL'

The *Kural* aims to give a description of the duties and character of the householder, the hermit and the state officers in the Tamil country. Tradition declares that the author composed it in response to a request for a Tamil Veda, to take the same place among the Tamil people as the Sanskrit Vedas do among the Aryans. It is not, however, a religious treatise but an ethical work, dealing with the conduct and character of various orders of society as they existed in his day. The book consists of 133 chapters of ten couplets each, in the *Kuraḷ Veṇbā* metre, from which it gets its name. Thus there are altogether 1330 couplets. These couplets are models of terseness and vividness, each one expressing in the briefest and most concise form the truth it seeks to convey. The Rev. P. Percival, a missionary of Jaffna, said of it: 'Nothing in the whole compass of human language can equal the force and terseness of the couplets in which the author of the *Kural* conveys the lessons of wisdom.'[1] Dr. Pope applies to the book the words used by Archbishop Trench of St. Augustine: 'He abounds in short and memorable, and, if I might so call them, epigrammatic sayings, concentrating with a forceful brevity the whole truth which he desires to impart into some single phrase, forging it into a polished shaft, at once pointed to pierce, and barbed that it shall not lightly drop from the mind and memory.'[2]

Many of the couplets are pen-and-ink sketches in words, calling up before the mind a vivid picture, such as 'the ass, clad in tiger's skin, cropping the grass,' or 'the crane

[1] vide *Tamil Wisdom*, p. 29. [2] *S.K* p. xv.

suddenly striking to seize its prey,' or 'a withered tree blossoming in a sandy waste,' or 'the leaden skies and the barren earth,' and so on.

The work is divided into three main parts, dealing respectively with Virtue, Wealth and Love—the first three *Padārthas* or objects of life, called in Sanskrit, *Dharma*, *Artha*, and *Kāma*, or in the Tamil language, *Aṛam*, *Poruḷ*, *Inbam*. The fourth Padārtha is *Moksha* (Salvation) and many reasons are given for the poet not including a fourth part on this subject. Much that he says under the heading of Virtue has indirect reference to the ideal of release or ultimate salvation. Tiruvaḷḷuvar is mainly concerned with practical things and with matters that belong to everyday life in this world, and so it is natural that he should have avoided treating of Salvation or Mokśha. He is no sectarian, and it is difficult to avoid sectarianism when one enters this theological realm. So he probably decided to leave it alone, believing that if people would but follow his teaching in the first three books they would attain to Moksha.

In the treatment of Dharma and Artha, i.e. Virtue and Wealth, the poet follows the general lines of Aryan ethics, and he had evidently studied many of the Sanskrit works either in the original or through a translation. He clearly borrows from both the *Mānava Dharma Śāstra* of Manu and from the *Artha Śāstra* of Kautilya, and shows acquaintance with other Sanskrit works such as the *Pañchatantra*, *Hitopadeśa*, *Rāmāyaṇa*, *Mahābhārata* and the *Nītisāra*. His obligation to Kautilya is particularly evident, as is pointed out further on. In the notes also frequent references will be found to Sanskrit works in which the thoughts of our author occur. But in all this 'he displays an originality of treatment and a sequence of ideas entirely his own.'[1]

The first chapter is a beautiful exposition of *bhakti* or devotion to God. Dr. Pope rightly says that the word bhakti denotes something which is really a combination of the Greek terms *pistis* and *agapē*, faith and love.[2] It expresses the living, trustful, adoring attitude

[1] *H.T.* p. 588. [2] *S.K.* p. vi.

of the soul to God. Our poet's exposition has nothing in it of sectarianism; and Hindus, Buddhists, Christians and Moslems can and do use most of these beautiful stanzas without any reservation whatever.

Then follow three introductory chapters, dealing with what may be called three essential factors of life in India; the rain-cloud's excellence, the greatness of spiritual leaders who have renounced all worldly pleasure, and the power of Virtue or Dharma. It is a significant thing that Tiruvaḷḷavur should have singled out these three factors in life as supremely important; and this alone stamps him as a realist, concerned with life as it must be lived. Anyone who has lived in India knows the part that rain plays in every sphere of life. Says Tiruvaḷḷuvar, 'Without rain, neither festival nor worship, neither charity nor virtue is possible' (2: 8). 'Every Indian budget,' said a famous Finance Member of India, 'is a gamble in rain.' With the failure of rains in India, life goes to pieces, families are separated, virtue decays, even existence becomes impossible. Even to-day, with improved irrigation and better communications, a failure of rain means an entire dislocation of the machinery of life and government in this land of villages; and in those days, when communications were bad and food could not be obtained for love or money, it meant starvation and death for hundreds of thousands.

Again in his emphasis upon the saint who has renounced all, the *sannyāsī*, the ideal religious teacher, he is sounding a note that rings out of India's heart. Even the king does not occupy the position of importance that the true *sannyāsī* or *sādhu* does. The sādhu brings to men in all walks of life the divine counsel and the divine power, and so is worthy of greater honour than the king. It is said that after the death of his wife Tiruvaḷḷuvar himself became a sādhu. It is not the priest but the prophet who is the supreme religious teacher in India. The Brahman sages came down from the north through the trackless forests of Central India and became the gurus and counsellors of many of the kings of the Tamil country. They were not priests, officiating at ceremonies, but men whose power rested on renunciation and moral idealism. The fourth chapter, on

the greatness of virtue, is what we should have expected. This is another illustration of the idea that lies behind all Hindu ethics and politics, that there is an ethical norm or standard, independent of all circumstances, eternal and inviolate, by which the deeds of gods and men, kings and citizens must be tested.

Following upon these introductory chapters is a section of twenty chapters devoted to virtue in domestic life, which gives a description of the ideal householder in his various relationships. Dr. Pope thus summarizes these chapters:

> The ideal householder leads on earth a consecrated life, not unmindful of any duty to the living or to the departed. . . . His children are his choicest treasures. Affection is the very life of his soul, of all the virtues the first and greatest. The sum and source of all is Love. His house is open to every guest, whom he welcomes with smiling face and pleasant word, and with whom he shares his meal. Courteous in speech, grateful for every kindness, just in all his dealings, master of himself in perfect self-control, strict in the performance of every duty, pure, patient and forbearing, with a heart free from envy, modest in desire, speaking no evil, refraining from useless words, dreading the touch of evil, diligent and liberal,—he is one whom all unite to praise.[1]

The emphasis that Tiruvaḷḷuvar places on love, forgiveness, gentleness and forbearance is especially noteworthy. It is possible that this may be due to the teaching of the Buddha, which was well-known in South India at that time; and the people of the south were peculiarly responsive to this gentle note. The same thing is true to-day in the south, where there is far less of the militant spirit than in the fiercer north. It has often been asserted that Tiruvaḷḷuvar must have known something of Christ's teaching, and the possibility of contact with Christian disciples cannot be overlooked. At the same time it must be said that there is no evidence to support the suggestion that he borrowed from Christian sources. It is not impossible that the influence of Buddhism, together with his own meditations upon the problems of life, under the inspiration of God's loving Spirit, led him to the thoughts and ideals which he has worked out in these chapters.

These chapters are followed by thirteen chapters on the

[1] *S.K.* p. x

Life of the Ascetic or Sannyāsī. Indian ethics has always found a place for the sannyāsī. It is rather interesting to see that Tiruvaḷḷuvar includes the quality of graciousness among the characteristics of the sannyāsī. One does not always associate the two, though it is generally true that the man who is most devoted to God partakes of His character of grace. The poet has a scathing denunciation of insincerity in sannyās, giving us in this connection some of his most vivid word-sketches. The virtue of *ahiṁsā*, so distinctive of Hindu ethics, is also a characteristic of the sannyāsī, with its concomitant virtue, equability of temper or absence of anger, as Tiruvaḷḷuvar calls it. Abstinence from animal food is a characteristic of the ascetic, but not necessarily of the householder. Men who are called to this special vocation have to undergo a special discipline and are not allowed to share in all the conveniences of the householder. It is appropriate that this section should conclude with four chapters, dealing respectively with the impermanence of earthly things, the meaning of true sannyās, the realization of the truth and the eradication of desire. The chapter on the realization of the truth shows how deep and wide was our sage's love of truth, and is well worth special study.

Then comes a chapter which stands alone, midway between the sections on Virtue and Wealth. There is a lurking shadow in every Indian heart and home, the shadow of relentless fate, or *Karma*. The Tamil word (ஊழ்) used by Tiruvaḷḷuvar for Karma or Fate means 'the ancient Thing,' —the force which has its roots in the past. This is not a blind force working haphazard, but a force which depends absolutely upon the deeds done by the soul in this or in a former birth. Every deed, (using the word in the widest possible sense to include desires, thoughts and words, as well as acts) carries with it an energy which must work itself out in this life or in another, and which determines the conditions of the soul's existence. No Indian philosophy can get away from this idea of Karma, and here in this chapter it stands out stark and bare, as Tiruvaḷḷuvar says, 'forestalling every action.' It has to be remembered that this is a peculiarly Aryan idea and is not found in ancient

Tamil literature. One remarkable thing, however, has to be noted in his philosophy. In a subsequent chapter entitled 'manliness' he refers again to Fate under the same name, 'the ancient thing,' and declares in unhesitating tones:

> Who undismayed, unwearying, plod on
> Will see the back of ancient Fate itself. (62: 10.)

So even 'ancient Fate' can be conquered, or rather worked out, by intense perseverance and energy.

Part II deals mainly with the State, and its functions and factors. In this section, as has been said before, there is ample proof that Tiruvaḷḷuvar was acquainted with Hindu books on politics, such as the *Artha Śāstra* of Chāṇakya. The *Kural* is so remarkably free from Sanskrit words that it is hardly likely he knew Sanskrit. He must therefore have somehow obtained a very thorough knowledge of the contents of these works. The seven elements of the kingdom—the king, the ministry, the country, defence, wealth, the army, and alliances—all come in the same order as in these Aryan treatises. The agreement of three investigators; the use of four kinds of tests to test the loyalty of servants; these and many other things agree so closely with the ideas of Sanskrit polity that it is impossible to explain them except on the hypothesis of clear and definite knowledge. Some have gone so far as to say that the *Kural* is a Tamil version of the *Artha Śāstra*. This, however, is not borne out by the book itself. Two important differences must be noted between the *Kural's* teaching on politics and that of all other political treatises of that time. First, there is no suggestion in the *Kural* that in politics it is admissible to leave the path of true virtue for the sake of good ends. Even the *Artha Śāstra* justifies crooked politics for the sake of the kingdom; but the *Kural* never strays into these Machiavellian wanderings (see 55: 6; 66: 10; 102: 6). Further, the *Kural* gives no hint of the theory that the king is in any sense divine or that he wields divine power. The king must act according to the principles of dharma, just as the humblest citizen. The king who swerves from virtue, even to the slight extent of being hard of access and careless in judgment, will be deprived of his sovereignty

(55: 8). One chapter deals especially with tyranny and depicts the doom of the king who oppresses his subjects (56). The only verse in which the king is called 'a god' makes it very clear that this is a name given to the just and benevolent prince because of his qualities, and not because of his office. 'The king who rules justly and guards his realm shall be thought of as a god to men' (39: 8). These two things are very significant, and show how far ahead of his contemporaries was this simple weaver-mystic of Mayilāpūr.

The following is a summary of the chapters 38 to 73, dealing with the qualities and conduct of the prince and his ministers, as given by V. V. S. Aiyar in his edition of the *Kural :*

> The prince should not be above the law and should be impartial and just (55). He should give full liberty of speech to his subjects and to his ministers to criticize him and his rule when he goes wrong (38: 9; 44: 7; 44: 8). The king should not loll in luxury, but should be alert and watchful and accessible to all who demand justice; should develop the resources of his kingdom and protect his subjects from internal and external warfare (39, 54, 60, 61, 62). He should be learned in all the arts of peace and war. He should choose his friends from among the good and great, and avoid the company of the low and vulgar (45, 40). He should examine his own mind constantly and never allow any vice to enter and obtain a foothold in it (44). He should select his officers with due care (51, 52), and supervise everything personally (51: 10; 55: 3), as well as by means of secret agents (59). He should look after his kindred and treat them worthily. Being almost all-powerful in the State, he should cultivate the quality that should be an automatic check on the extravagant use of his power, namely that of considerateness towards all (58). But above all, he should be firm and daring, and should never be weak or irresolute in his purposes.
>
> As to the minister, he should be a man of affairs, clever, pure-minded, devoted to the prince, and skilful in reading the hearts of men. He should be a courtier in the best sense of the term, knowing when to speak and what to speak, and when to hold his tongue. When representing his master in foreign courts he should be respectful to the prince to whose court he is appointed, and polite and social with the high functionaries of that court; but at the same time and above all, he should have an ever-watchful eye to the interests and honour of his prince. Lastly, he should be well-versed in all the arts of the forum (64–73).[1]

[1] *V.V.S.* pp. xxiii, xxiv.

In this section on Politics there are many stanzas which, while they refer in the first place to the king or his ministers; have also a general application to all men; as for instance the chapters on learning, listening, energy, manliness and so on.

At the end of the section on Politics there are thirteen chapters which form an appendix to this part of the book. These deal with general themes such as nobility, honour, greatness, courtesy, agriculture, begging and vileness. In these chapters is summed up the author's ideal of conduct. His idea of the perfectly foolish man is interesting and reveals in a flash his own aversions and the antithesis of his own ideals:

> Shamelessness, listlessness, lovelessness, heedlessness—
> These are the four traits of foolish men. (84 : 3.)

Compare with this his ideal of the kingly character:

> Courage, charity, wit and grit—these four
> Unfailing, the kingly nature make. (39 : 2.)

The chapter on Farming in this appendix again shows how closely in touch with reality our poet lives. Agriculture is the chief industry of India, about nine-tenths of the population having direct connections with it; and just as in the introductory section Tiruvaḷḷuvar devotes one chapter to the 'Rain-cloud's Excellence,' so in this concluding section he gives one chapter to the importance of farming. As a village weaver he would know well how much depended upon the farmer and his work.

The third part of the *Kural* is in direct line with the indigenous poetry of the Tamil people. It deals with what is called in Tamil *aham* or love between the two sexes. Mr. Drew, one of the earlier translators of the *Kural*, said of this third part: 'It could not be translated into any European language without exposing the translator to infamy.'[1] Dr. Pope dissented entirely from this opinion and has included a complete translation of it in his book. He says of it, 'I am persuaded that it is perfectly pure in its tendency and in the intention of its wise and high-

[1] *S.K.* p. xii.

souled composer.'[1] The Rev. J. S. M. Hooper agrees with Dr. Pope and says of it: 'He was altogether free from prudery, so much is perfectly clear; but it is probably equally true to say that there is nothing in the third part of the *Kural* to destroy the impression of high morality and essential delicacy produced by the earlier parts.'[2] V. V. S. Aiyar, the most recent translator of the *Kural*, has included a complete and careful translation of Part III in his book.

This third part is divided into sections in accordance with the regular Tamil tradition. The first section concerns *Kaḷavu* or furtive love, that is the spontaneous union of man and maid without the regular ceremonies of marriage. This was one of the ordinary customs of ancient Tamil social practice, and was recognized as being the prelude to a binding union. It was the custom for the lovers to meet outside the village and when their love was discovered by the others, to proclaim their union and have it formally recognized by the village elders. Here we see the poetry of spontaneous love portrayed with a delightful delicacy of feeling and a wealth of simile very characteristic of the Tamil people. The latter section pictures the course of *Kaṛpu* or married love, and portrays the joy of husband and wife, the pangs of separation and the bliss of reunion. As Mr. Hooper says, 'the whole of this Third Book is strongly reminiscent of the Song of Songs.'[3] Like the *Song ot Solomon* this also has been interpreted allegorically by many commentators; but there is nothing to indicate that the poet had any such allegorical idea in mind and it would ill accord with the vivid realism that he shows elsewhere. Some of the couplets in this Third Part are very charming and the reader will find a selection of them in this work.

TIRUVAḶḶUVAR AND WOMANHOOD

It is rather an interesting problem to attempt to understand the poet's idea of womanhood. A study in Tamil on this subject by Mr. T. P. Mīnākshisundram has

[1] *S.K.* p. xii. [2] *J.S.M.H.* pp. 11, 12. [3] ibid. p. 11.

appeared.[1] The author points out that we must judge Tiruvaḷḷuvar by his time and not by ours. In those days of war and insecurity it was the custom to guard carefully the womenfolk from the fury of raiders. There is nothing however to indicate that women were regarded and treated as mere chattels. As we have seen, there were many poetesses among them, which implies that they as well as the boys were educated. It is probable that the influence of Aryan ideas, which were spreading through the Tamil land, was helping to give woman a subordinate position, but judging from the *Kural* itself it cannot be said that Tiruvaḷḷuvar had a low opinion of women. In Chapter 7 on the 'Gift of Children,' he makes use of the common plural in seven out of the ten stanzas and only uses the word 'son' in stanzas 7, 9 and 10. In Chapter 6 on the wife, whom he calls 'the Helpmeet of the Home,' he exalts her position in every possible way. She evidently had charge of the family purse and was the mistress of this side of household life (6: 1). He goes on to declare that there is nothing in the world nobler than a chaste woman (6: 4) and a man's good fortune lies in the worth of his wife (6: 10). It is true that this chapter contains the couplet which enjoins upon the wife the duty of worshipping her husband as a god. It is most likely that the poet obtained this idea from his study of the Sanskrit śāstras and particularly of Manu's work. Tiruvaḷḷuvar regards the family life as high as the life of the sannyāsī, and as bringing all the blessings that can be obtained by means of the ascetic life. Any philosopher who does this cannot think meanly of women. In his chapter on learning he uses words which apply to both sexes and so indicates the necessity of education for both men and women. It is true that he despises what he calls 'petticoat rule' in the kingdom, but this refers to the king who, without weighing matters carefully for himself, accepts blindly the opinion of his womenfolk. Further there is nothing in the *Kural* to suggest that the poet ever thought of polygamy. The ideal set forth throughout is that of monogamy.

[1] *vide* p. 114, No. 7.

Monogamy always means the elevation of womanhood. Tiruvaḷḷuvar has scathing condemnation for those who frequent prostitutes, as well as for the prostitutes themselves. While we cannot expect this humble poet of the Tamil land of fourteen centuries ago to express modern ideas about women, it is clear that he gave them a very high position in life and believed that their function in society was a noble one, for which they should be fitted by suitable education. One of the most noble qualities of men —graciousness—is symbolized in his poems by a beautiful maiden. So while we must not expect to find in the *Kural* modern ideas of the place of womanhood, we do find womanhood given a high position.

THE STYLE AND FORM OF THE BOOK

The *Kural* consists of 1330 terse and brief couplets in the metric form known as the *Kuṛaḷ Veṇbā*, one of the most distinctive and difficult of Tamil metres, which may be an imitation of the Sanskrit *Sūtra* form. It is the earliest extant work in this metre, and the poet reveals a complete mastery of his form. The first line of the couplet consists of four feet, and the second of three, the last foot being a peculiar kind of incomplete foot. Indian metres are all governed by length and there is no accent. These feet may consists of two long syllables; or of one long syllable followed by two short ones; or of three long syllables; or of one long syllable followed by two short ones and then another long one; or of two short syllables followed by a long one; or of four short syllables; or of two short and two long syllables; or of three short and one long syllable. The rules governing the linking of these syllables are very strict. A long syllable at the end of a spoṇdee (– –) must be followed by two short syllables at the beginning of the next foot, and a long syllable at the end of an anapæst (◡ ◡ –) must be followed by a long syllable at the beginning of the next foot. In addition there must be a certain amount of initial vowel alliteration, as well as second syllable rhyming between the first and fourth or first and fifth feet, as for example *Ahara* and *Bahavan*, *Malar* and

Nilam, *Kāmam* and *Nāmam*. We reproduce in English letters two of these couplets so as to give readers unacquainted with Tamil some idea of the verse form of the original:

Anbilār ellām tamakkuriyar anbudaiyār
Yenbum uriyar piṛarkku (8: 2.)

Nandṛi maṛappathu nandṛandṛu nandṛalla
Thandṛē maṛappathu nandṛu (11: 8.)

The *Kural* is a didactic poem, and it is well-known that in such poems it is not always easy to preserve the poetic quality. Tiruvaḷḷuvar, however, does so, partly by the use of poetic devices of rhythm and alliteration and partly by means of artistic similes and happy illustrations. Again and again the genuine love of nature, which distinguished the Tamil poetic genius before it was overlaid by the conventions of Aryan verse, is revealed in the couplets of the *Kural.* The lotus pool, the heron in the paddy field, the green grass, the well in the river-sand, the useless brackish soil—these and many other illustrations show how the poet loved simple natural things.

One of the peculiarities of the style of the author of the *Kural* is an exaggerated emphasis upon a particular virtue or vice, which is the subject of his comment at that particular moment. It is something like the 'Kathenotheism' of the *Rig Veda*, which selects one special god upon whom to concentrate devotion at a particular time, without implying anything derogatory about the others. So also Tiruvaḷḷuvar selects one particular virtue or vice for special emphasis, making it for the time being the chief of virtues or vices (see 16: 1; 30: 5; 32: 7; 34: 1; 58: 9; 84: 4).

THE 'KURAL' IN TAMIL LIFE AND LETTERS

From the earliest times up to the present day the *Kural* has been one of the most-quoted literary works of the Tamil land. The terse, vivid couplets lend themselves so aptly to memorization and quotation, and there is a charm about them that makes us want to repeat them again and again. We have already shown that it is quoted in the

literature produced in the years immediately succeeding the composition of the work, and from that time on we find it continually quoted in all great literature. The literature of subsequent periods bears ample testimony to the influence exercised by this wonderful little work during all the centuries.[1] During the past fifty years there has been a further considerable growth of interest in the *Kural* on the part of all classes. It is studied in schools and colleges and forms the ethical basis of many a young man's life. In the villages many of the couplets are well-known and a quotation from the *Kural* never fails to win a response. Christians, Buddhists, Muhammadans and Hindus—all the different religious sects make use of the work without reluctance or qualification and find in it teaching that enriches life and helps men and women to fight their moral battles.

V. V. S. Aiyar says that the children of zemindars in the Tamil country, up to thirty years ago, were taught the *Kural* with a view to their instruction in the art of good government.[2]

Thus for centuries the *Kural* has been 'the ethical Bible of the Tamil people.' Gifted with dry humour and vivid artistry of language, the author has put into unforgettable couplets the essential principles and duties of life in all lands, and has woven into a beautiful picture the various ideals to which India has given expression in her different religions. It is a book that should be studied by all who wish to know what India can contribute to the ethical thought of the ages. In its combination of idealism and practicality, in its insistence upon the inviolability of dharma by ascetic, king or householder, and in its emphasis upon a life of strenuous service and undaunted perseverance, it is as applicable to the world to-day as it was to the India of 1500 years ago. M. Ariel, a great French scholar in Tamil, says of this book:

> That which above all is wonderful in the *Kural* is the fact that the author addresses himself, without regard to castes, peoples or beliefs, to the whole community of mankind: the fact that he formulates

[1] vide *Critical Studies in Kural*, pp. 82-89. [2] *V.V.S.* p. xliii.

sovereign morality and absolute reason: that he proclaims in their essence, in their eternal abstractedness, virtue and truth; he presents, as it were, in one group the highest laws of domestic and social life; he is equally perfect in thought, in language and in poetry, in the austere metaphysical contemplation of the great mysteries of the Divine nature, as in the easy and graceful analysis of the tenderest emotions of the heart.[1]

This little book, in company with a few others, belongs not merely to a single people, but to the world; and as long as men love virtue for its own sake and esteem goodness as more precious than rubies, it will continue to be treasured as one of the literary and ethical masterpieces of the world.

As we study this wonderful little book surely we can re-echo the thought of an ancient bard of the Tamil land, Kavuṇiyanār:

> The *Kural's* sweet to mouth and ear and mind;
> 'Tis balm for twofold deeds that birth rebind.
> 'Twas sung by Vaḷḷuvar, the poet wise and true,
> That we might know the righteous path of old anew.
>
> —*Tiru. Mālai*, 51.

சிந்தைக் கினிய செவிக்கினிய வாய்க்கினிய
வந்த விருவினைக்கு மாமருந்து—முந்திய
நன்னெறி நாமறிய நாப்புலமை வள்ளுவனார்
பன்னிய வின் குறள் வெண்பா.

[1] *S.K.* p. i.

TRANSLATIONS OF SELECTED COUPLETS



TEMPLE OF TIRUVAḶḶUVAR AT MYLAPORE



TEMPLE TO VĀŚUKI AT MYLAPORE

VIRTUE

PREFACE

1. In Praise of God

1. As letters all are based on 'A',
   The world is based on God—the First.
2. What use is lore, if the learnèd will not bow
   Before the feet of Him—the All-wise One?
3. They'll live for ever in the land above,
   Who cling to Him that bides in lotus-hearts.
4. Trouble shall never come to those
   Who cling to the desireless One.
5. The twain dark deeds shall ne'er be theirs,
   Who give the Lord His rightful praise.
6. Forever shall they live, who firmly stand
   In the true path of Him who's Victor o'er the senses five.
7. Except by clinging to that Peerless One,
   'Tis hard mind's sorrow to dispel.
8. 'Tis hard to swim this world's wide sea,
   Unless we cling to Him,—Ocean of grace and good.
9. The head that bows not to our God Supreme
   Is useless as a senseless sense.
10. Who then can swim this mighty sea of births?
    Not they who cling not to our Sovereign's feet.

N.B.—Notes on the various stanzas will be found on pp. 69–107.

2. The Rain-cloud's Excellence

1. When rain comes right, the world goes on;
   'Tis fitting then to call it 'heavenly food.'

2. Rain makes good food for men;
   Itself is food for hungry men.

3. Should the clouds deceive this sea-girt world,
   Hunger and thirst will ramp and rage.

4. The ploughman cannot ply his plough
   Should the monsoon's abundance fail.

5. 'Tis lack of rain that ruins all;
   And the rain's help that lifts the ruined up.

6. If from the sky rain-drops ne'er fall,
   Fresh blades of grass will ne'er be seen.

7. E'en the wide ocean's wealth will fail,
   If bulging cloud-banks pour not down again.

8. Worship and festival will fail the gods,
   Should heaven's rain dry up for men.

9. Both poor and gods will lose their gifts,
   Should heaven fail to pour its gifts on men.

10. If water fails, the world is lost;
    E'en virtue, if rain fails, is lost for all.

3. The Greatness of Ascetics

1. 'Tis the aim of holy scripture to reveal
   The greatness of those men who all have left for Virtue's sake.

2. To tell their greatness who have left their all
   Is just like counting up the whole world's dead.

3. Their greatness shines throughout the world,
   Who know both states, and Virtue here have donned.

4. He, in the best of states, a seed will be,
   Who rules the senses five with firmness' goad.

5. Indra himself, heaven's king, is witness sure
   To the might of him who senses five subdues.

6. Hard things the great will always do;
   Hard things the mean can never do.

7. He holds the world in fief,
   Who knows the measure of the senses five.

8. The greatness of the men of certain speech
   On earth by hidden word is shown.

9. E'en for a moment, it is hard to check the wrath
   Of those who've climbed the mount of saintliness.

10. The learned say that saints alone are Brahmans true,
    For they behave as clothed in grace to every living thing.

4. The Might of Virtue

1. Than Virtue true what greater good is there for men?
   It gives eternal bliss and temporal wealth.

2. Than Virtue, greater good doth not exist;
   No greater ill than this to lose.

3. By every means, in every way you can,
   With ne'er a halt, live virtuously.

4. Be pure in mind, for that true Virtue is;
   All else is merely sound and sham.

5. Envy, greed, anger, bitter words—these four
   Avoiding, and then pressing on, is Virtue true.

6. Say not: 'We'll see another day,' but practise Virtue now;
   'Twill be in dying day undying help.

7. There is no need to say; 'Here's Virtue's path';
   Just see the *palki*-bearer, and its rider too.

8. If wasting ne'er a single day, a man does good,
   'Twill be a stone that blocks the path of endless births.

9. That only which doth spring from good is joy;
   All else is merely pain and shame.

10. Only the good is fit to do;
    The bad is ever fit to shun.

DOMESTIC VIRTUE

5. Home-life

1. He lives home-life who stands in Virtue's path,
   And helps the orders three in their good paths.

2. He lives true home-life who's a help
   To the lost, the poor and to the dead.

3. *Pitris*, gods, kin, one's guests and self—
   To serve these five is duty chief.

4. Ne'er shall be lack of offspring in his house,
   Who fearing ill, gives ere he enjoys.

5. If in the home true love and Virtue dwell,
   Home-life is full of grace and fruit.

6. If home-life's lived always in Virtue's way,
   What good is there in leaving house and home?

7. He, who lives home-life worthily,
   Shall first among all strivers be.

8. Home-life, that helps the saints and swerves from Virtue ne'er,
   Endures more trials than lonely hermit-life.

9. Home-life itself is Virtue's way;
   The other, too, is good, if men no fault can find.

10. He, who lives home-life worthily on earth,
    Will win a place 'mong gods who dwell in heaven.

6. The Worth of Home's Helpmeet

1. She is true helpmeet of the home, who having homely worth,
   Spendeth within her husband's means.

2. If homely worth be lacking in the wife,
   Whatever worth there be, no home-life can be there.

3. If she be worthy, what doth ever lack?
   If she be worthless, then what else remains?



A RURAL TAMIL HOUSEHOLDER AND FAMILY

Photo by Rev. W. J. Hauch

4. What is more precious than the wife,
   If rugged strength of chastity be hers?

5. She who, on waking, bows before her spouse and before no other god,
   May ask for rain, and rain it will.

6. She is true wife who, guarding self and cherishing her spouse,
   With tireless goodness their good name unsullied holds.

7. What is the use of prison's ward for wife?
   Her ward of chastity is chief.

8. If wives their husbands cherish well,
   They shall find glory in the world of gods.

9. They cannot walk with lion-hearted pride,
   Whose wives guard not their name 'fore mocking eyes.

10. A man's good fortune is his wife's own worth;
    Its ornaments his good children are.

7. The Gift of Children

1. 'Mong all the prizes that men win, there's none so fine
   As children that have knowledge surely won.

2. The evils of the seven births shall ne'er touch those
   Who've upright children, living blameless lives.

3. 'Here is our wealth,' the wise say of their bairns:
   For through their deeds true wealth will surely come.

4. Gruel that children's little hands have stirred
   Is sweeter far than nectar of the gods.

5. To stroke the children's limbs is sweet to hand;
   To hear their words is sweetest music to the ear.

6. 'The flute is sweet, the lute is sweet,' say those
   Who've never heard the pretty prattle of their little ones.

7. To make him first in the assembly of the wise
   Is all a father for his son can do.

8. To all upon this earth, that children wisdom win
   More precious is than e'en their very selves.

9. The mother, who has heard her son called 'great,'
   Gains greater joy than even at his birth.

10. To live that men will ask, 'What penance did his father do?'—
    This is the greatest help that son can render to his sire.

8. Love

1. Is there a bolt that can avail to shut up love?
   The trickling tears of loving eyes would tell it out.

2. All for themselves the loveless spend;
   The loving e'en their bones for others give.

3. The link of soul and body, say the wise,
   Is but the fruit of man's own link with love.

4. Love doth the trait of tenderness beget;
   That, too, begets true friendship's priceless worth.

5. The bliss of earth and heav'n the blessèd gain,
   The learnèd say, is rooted in a loving life.

6. The foolish say, 'Love helps the good alone';
   But surely 'tis a help 'gainst evil too.

7. As the sun's heat burns up all boneless things,
   So Virtue doth burn up all loveless things.

8. To live the home-life with a loveless heart
   Is like a withered tree flowering in barren sand.

9. To those who lack the inward means of love
   What use is there in any outward means?

10. The living soul subsists in love;
    The loveless are but skin and bone.



AN IMAGE OF THE GODDESS LAKSHMĪ IN THE MADURA TEMPLE

9. Caring for the Guest

1. The wealth and joy of home-life have one aim:
   To cherish guests and show them kindnesses.
2. To eat oneself while stranger waits without
   Makes e'en immortal nectar undesired.
3. Who daily cherisheth the coming guest
   Shall ne'er by want or woe be hard oppressed.
4. Lakshmī with joyful heart will dwell with him
   Who with a cheerful mien his guest receives.
5. What need is there that he should sow his field,
   Who welcomes guests and eats but what remains?
6. He'll be a welcome guest to gods on high,
   Who speeds the parting guest, and coming guest awaits.
7. There is no measure for the fruit of kindliness:
   The guest's own worth—this is its measure true.
8. 'We've cherished wealth, but now are helpless left,'—so say
   Those who've not yet begun to cherish guests.
9. The crass stupidity that will not cherish guests
   Is poverty in wealth; 'tis only found in fools.
10. As in the very smelling fades the *anicham* flower,
    So at a changing glance the guest's heart sinks.

10. Kindly Speech

1. Kind speech is love-filled, guile-free speech:
   The speech of those who've seen the Real.
2. Better than giving with a willing mind
   Is giving with a cheery smile and kindly word.
3. With smiling face and kindly look kind words to say,
   If from the heart they come, is Virtue real.
5. Humility and kindly speech are jewels rare;
   All else are baubles of no worth.

6. Evil will fade and good will grow in him,
   Who seeking good, speaks kindly words.

8. Kind speech, from meanness free, will bring great joy,
   Both in this life and in the life beyond.

9. Why does a man speak bitter words,
   When he has seen the joy that kind words give?

10. To use harsh words when kind words are at hand,
    Is picking unripe fruit where ripe fruit hangs.

11. Gratitude

1. E'en heav'n and earth avail not to repay
   The good that's done spontaneously.

2. A kind deed done in time of need, though small,
   Is of more value than the world itself.

4. Though kindly deed be small as millet seed,
   The wise will think it large as palm-tree nut.

5. A kind deed is not measured by the deed itself;
   But by the worth of those to whom it's done.

6. Those who in trouble helped you, ne'er forsake;
   And ne'er forget the friendship of the pure.

8. E'er to forget a kind deed done is bad;
   But to forget an ill at once is good.

10. For him who's killed all good, escape may be;
    But none for him who's killed a kindness done.

12. Fairness

1. Fairness to all is good supreme:
   To friends, foes, fellows, acting fair.

3. Give up the wealth that's gained by unfair means,
   Though it may bring you good alone.

5. Both loss and gain must surely come to all:
   An unwarped mind the wise man's jewel is.

8. As scales that, even poised, do weigh aright,
   Unbending fairness wise men's jewel is.

9. Fairness means freedom from all crooked speech,
   If the mind, too, is free from crookedness.

10. To guard the things of others as their own—
   This is good trade for those who traders are.

13. Self-control

1. Right self-control will lead a man to heaven;
   The lack of it will lead to darkest night.

2. Guard self-control as treasure rare;
   'Tis wealth supreme to everyone.

5. 'Tis good for all to have humility;
   But unto wealthy men 'tis riches rare.

7. Whatever else is uncontrolled, control the tongue;
   Or you will come to grief in many a faulty word.

9. The sore that's made by fire will heal again;
   Not so the wound that by the tongue is made.

14. Right Conduct

1. Right conduct to true greatness leads;
   It should be held more dear than life itself.

2. Guard well thy conduct; study as thou wilt,
   A better help thou canst not find.

6. The strong-souled men will ne'er in conduct fail:
   They know too well the ills that failure brings.

8. Good conduct—this the seed of goodness is;
   An evil life is cause of endless ills.

10. Who've not the art of noble living learnt,
   Though much they've learnt, are still unlearnèd men.

16. Forbearance

1. As earth bears up the men who pierce her sore,
   To bear with our revilers, chief of virtues is.

2. Forgive always the ills that others do;
   But to forget them—this is nobler still.

3. To turn away a guest is poorest poverty;
   But he who bears with fools shows mightiest might.

4. If you nobility would have for aye,
   Keep on forbearing day by day.

6. The overbearing taste their joy but for a day;
   The forbearing shall have praise till world shall end.

7. Though others ill may do, 'tis better far
   On their behalf to suffer, to no one doing ill.

8. By their own forbearance let men o'ercome those
   Who, in their pride, have wrought them grievous ill.

10. Who, willingly, can hunger bear are truly great;
    But yet less great than those who freely bear men's unkind words.

17. Freedom from Envy

5. Envy alone is ill enough to envious men;
   Though they escape their foes, 'twill surely ruin bring.

7. Lakshmī herself the envious cannot bear;
   She'll show him to her sister sinister and go.

9. The wealth of envious-minded men
   And ruin of the righteous, should be pondered well.

10. Never have envious men true greatness reached,
    Nor have the envy-free failed greatness to attain.

19. Freedom from Back-biting

2. 'Tis sin to murder Virtue and do vicious deeds;
   But greater sin to smile deceitfully and slander men.

5. The emptiness of that man's heart, who Virtue prates,
   Is shown by his foul slander, made behind another's back.

9. Surely for Virtue's sake alone doth earth bear up the weight
   Of men who foully slander fellow-men behind their back.

10. If each one saw *his* faults, as those of foes,
    Would any ill befall the human race?

20. Refraining from Vain Speech

6. Call him not 'man' who makes display of useless words:
   Call him but 'chaff of humankind.'

21. Dread of Evil Deeds

2. Ill deeds give rise to ills alone;
   Ill deeds then must be feared far more than fire.

4. Plan not another's ruin, e'en in forgetful mood;
   Or Virtue will herself the planner's ruin plan.

7. Men may escape scot-free from every foe;
   But ill deeds' wrath will dog the steps and slay at last.

22. Beneficence

1. True charity ne'er seeks return;
   To rain-cloud what return can men e'er make?

2. Wealth won by toil, 'mong worthy folk,
   Is meant for doing good.

5. The wise man's wealth, if he doth care for men,
   Is like o'erflowing waters of the village tank.

7. The wealth of generous souls is like the tree
   That healing balm distils for every ill.

10. E'en should beneficence to ruin lead,
    'Tis well worth while to sell oneself for that.

23. Charity

5. The strong man's strength in hunger's conquest lies;
   But greater still the strength that others' hunger stays.

8. The joy of charity how can the hard-eyed know?
   They only hoard their wealth and lose it all.

9. Th' enjoyment of one's hoarded wealth alone
   Than begging surely is more bitter far.

10. 'Tis said that nought more bitter is than Death;
   But if one cannot give, e'en Death is sweet.

ASCETIC VIRTUE

25. Kindliness

1. The wealth of kindliness is wealth indeed:
   For even vicious men have worldly wealth.

2. Walk the good way, consider and be kind;
   Though many ways you study, this your aid will be.

3. There is no dark and dismal hell ordained
   For those whose heart is full of kindliness.

7. Yon world's joy is not for those who kindness lack,
   As this world's joy is not for those who riches lack.

8. Those lacking wealth one day may prosperous be:
   Those lacking kindness for ever will lack all.

9. Ponder the charity of those who kindness lack:
   'Tis like Truth's vision seen by muddled minds.

26. Abstinence from Flesh-eating

1. Howe'er can kindness rule that man,
   Who eateth other flesh to make his own increase?

5. To keep from eating flesh is life's stability;
   Hell ne'er will ope its mouth the flesh-eater to free.

27. Tapas or Austerities

1. All pains to bear and then no pain to give to any life—
   This is in Tapas that which matters most.

7. As gold more brightly shines, when stronger burns the fire,
   So shine the saints more bright, when worse their troubles grow.

28. Inconsistency

1. The elements five within will surely laugh to scorn
   The evil covert walk of crafty-minded men.

3. The show of power of one, who has no power within,
   Is like a cow in tiger-skin, which quietly grazes on.

4. He who, when doing ill, hideth in saintly garb,
   Is like a fowler snaring birds, while lurking in the bush.

6. None crueller are than those, who are in heart no saints,
   Yet live in covert guise, in show of saintliness.

10. For shaven crown or matted hair there is no further need,
    If men will only shun what noble minds condemn.

29. Freedom from Fraud

2. Think not, 'We will by fraud another's riches steal':
   For e'en to think of doing ill is sinfulness indeed.

3. As riches won by fraud grow quickly more and more,
   So will they, just like that, as swiftly come to nought.

30. Truthfulness

1. What is it that men 'truthfulness' do call?
   'Tis speech that's free from any taint of evil fruit.

2. E'en untruth may in truth's own nature share,
   If faultless good it can produce.

3. Tell not a lie, e'en though your heart alone does know:
   Your very heart will burn you for that lie.

4. Who in his soul doth walk from falsehood free,
   Will live for ever in the souls of noble-minded men.

5. Who speaketh forth the truth with all his heart,
   Is chief 'mong those who do both alms and tapas too.

8. An outward purity by water's aid is caused;
   But inward purity by truthfulness is shown.

9. Not every kind of lamp is really a light:
   The lamp of Truth alone to wise men is the Light.

10. Of all true things that we have ever known
    Not one with truthfulness can e'er compare.

31. Refraining from Anger

1. Who curbs his wrath, when it has power, curbs it indeed;
   When power there's none, what matters if he curbs or not?

4. Both smile and joy it kills:
   What greater foe than wrath?

5. Curb well your wrath, if you would guard yourself;
   For wrath will ruin you, if you will curb it not.

6. The fire of wrath, that burns up all that's near,
   Will burn up, too, the pleasant bark of friendship rare.

32. Ahiṁsā—Refraining from Hurt

1. 'Tis the motto of the pure to no one to give pain,
   E'en though great glory-giving wealth they win.

2. 'Tis the motto of the pure to make no ill return,
   E'en though with malice men do ill to them.

4. If you would punish those who've done you ill,
   Shame them by kindness in return.

5. If others' pains you cannot feel, just as your own,
   What good can ever come from knowledge gained?

7. Ne'er doing the least hurt to any with intent
   Is chief of all the virtues rare.

9. If ere noonday you ill to others do,
   At e'en will ill itself unsought come unto you.

34. Impermanence

1. To think that things of time will last alway,
   Of follies all, the height of folly is.

8. The bird forsakes its shell and flies away:
   So fleeting is the bond of soul and flesh.

9. Death is like sinking into sleep:
   Birth is like waking after sleep.

35. Renunciation

1. Whate'er, whate'er a man gives up,
   By that, by that he hath no further pain.

6. He who destroys this pride of 'I' and 'mine,'
   Will gain sure entrance to the realm above the gods.

10. Hold fast to Him who needs no hold;
    Hold fast that Hold, and you'll be free from other hold.

36. Understanding the Truth

2. Darkness departs and bliss results to those,
   Who, from delusion freed, have seen the vision pure.

3. Nearer indeed is heaven than earth to those,
   Who, freed from doubt, have realized the Truth.

4. Whate'er it be, whate'er its nature be,
   In that to see the Truth, is knowledge true.

8. Freed from the folly that leads us back to birth,
   To realize the Good supreme, is knowledge true.

9. Those clinging and destroying ills shall ne'er touch him
   Who the real Refuge knows and from all bonds lives free.

37. Freedom from Desire

2. If aught you wish, then wish for birthlessness;
   That of itself will come, if wishlessness you wish.

3. There's here no greater wealth than wishlessness;
   And there, too, nothing is to equal it.

4. For heaven itself is freedom from desire;
   And that will come from longing for the Truth.

5. Freed from desire, then only are we free;
   Others, though free from ills, are not entirely free.

38. Old Karma

4. Twofold indeed does this world's fashion seem;
   Each is to each unlike, the wealthy and the wise.

5. All good is turned to ill, when winning wealth,
   And ill to good, through tricks by Karma played.

10. What then is mightier than this Karma old?
    Though men contrive another thing, *That* steps before.

PROPERTY

KINGSHIP

39. Kingly Excellence

2. Courage, charity, wit and grit—these four
   Unfailing, the kingly nature make.

3. Alertness, wisdom and decisiveness—these three
   Should ne'er be lacking in rulers of the earth.

4. From Dharma's path ne'er swerving, adharma to remove,
   With courage sure to keep one's honour bright, is kingship true.

6. If easy of access the king be and from all harsh words free,
   Then all the world will sing high praises of his land.

7. The world will praise and will obey that king,
   Who, speaking kindly words, is able both to give and guard.

9. The world will surely rest under the aegis of that king,
   Whose nature 'tis to bear with bitter words.

40. Learning

1. Learn well whate'er worth learning is;
   And having learnt, live worthily.

5. As beggars 'fore the rich, the learnèd to their guru bow;
   The learnèd are the high, unlearnèd are the low.

6. The more men dig, the more the water flows from sandy springs;
   The more men learn, the more indeed their wisdom flows.

7. All lands to learnèd men belong, all towns are home;
   How then can men remain unlearnèd till their dying day?

41. Neglect of Learning

3. E'en ignorant men may pass for men of worth,
   If 'mong the wise they learn to hold their tongue.

6. The ignorant are like useless brackish land;
   They *are*—and that is all that can be said.

42. Listening

1. True wealth of wealth is wealth gained through the ear;
   'Midst all our wealth that is indeed the chief.

2. When to the listening ear food is not close at hand,
   Then let a little to the hungry mouth be given.

5. The words of righteous men are like a staff
   To those whose feet are set in slippery ways.

6. Listen to good words, though they be but few;
   For e'en those few great dignity will give.

10. What matter if they live or die, who only know
    What's sweet to tongue, and not what's sweet to ear?

43. Wisdom

2. Wisdom holds back the mind from wandering where it lists,
   Guards it from ill, and leads it to the good.

3. 'Tis wisdom true for men to find the Real
   In whatso'er they hear, from whomsoever heard.

5. 'Tis wise to win the friendship of the wise;
   To keep it without wax or wane is wisdom rare.

8. 'Tis folly fearful ills with recklessness to face;
   The wise man fears indeed those things that should be feared.

44. Correction of Faults

3. When men who fear dishonour a fault commit, though small as millet seed,
   They'll always think it great as palm-tree's bulky fruit.

6. What fault can that king e'er commit,
   Who first his own and then the faults of others checks?

45. Winning the Help of the Great

3. Of rare gifts 'tis the rarest gift of all,
   The great to cherish and to hold them as one's kin.

4. 'Tis chief of all the powers that men may wield
   To walk in friendship with the greater ones.

9. Without some capital, all gain's impossible;
   Without good friends' support, no surety can there be.

46. Keeping Away from Bad Company

2. The water's nature changes with the nature of the soil;
   So changes knowledge with the nature of one's friends.

5. True purity of thought and purity of deed—
   Both on the purity of friendship rest.

9. By inward purity Heaven may be surely won;
   That, too, will gain in power from good companionship.

10. No greater help is there than good companionship;
    Than bad companionship there is no direr foe.

47. Acting with Forethought

6. Ruin may come from doing what should not be done;
   But also from not doing that which should be done.

7. Think well and then decide to do;
   'Tis folly to decide, then say, 'Now let us think.'

48. Knowledge of Power

5. E'en if with peacocks' feathers the cart be pilèd high,
   The axle-tree will break, if over bulky be the load.

6. Those who have climbed the branch's utmost tip,
   And still go pressing on, will surely lose their life.

49. Knowing the Opportunity

1. In clear daylight, the crow will beat the owl;
   The king who'd beat his foe must choose the fitting time.

3. Is anything too hard for men to win,
   If they with fitting means will choose the fitting time?

10. Be like the heron when 'tis time for lying low:
    But like its strike, when time for action comes.

50. Knowing the Place

6. The strong-wheeled lofty chariot rides not upon the sea;
   The ocean-going vessel goes not upon the land.

10. The jackal, when in miry soil, in which the feet sink deep,
    Will kill the fearless elephant that goreth armèd men.

51. Selection and Confidence

1. Choose your man well, after the fourfold test:
   By dharma, riches, love and fear of death.

4. Weigh well a man's good traits and then his faults;
   And value him on seeing which prevails.

8. For each man's conduct is the touchstone sure
Both to his greatness and his smallness too.

9. Trust no man whom you have not tried;
When tried, then trust with fitting task.

10. To trust an untried man, or doubt one tried—
These both will endless trouble bring.

52. Selection and Employment

3. Trust one who has the four good traits:
Love, wisdom, clarity, a greed-free soul.

53. Steady Purpose

10. 'Tis easy to achieve an aim,
If it be firmly kept in mind.

55. Righteous Rule

6. 'Tis not the spear that to the king gives victory;
But 'tis his royal sceptre, if that ne'er crookèd be.

58. Graciousness

1. The world goes smoothly on when graciousness,
That beauteous maid, resides in kingly souls.

3. Of what use is a song that can't be sung?
What use an eye that hath no graciousness?

5. The jewel of the eye is graciousness;
If that be lacking, then 'tis but a sore.

9. To show to those who vex us sore true graciousness,
And patiently to bear with them, is best of all good traits.

60. Energy

1. 'Tis energy alone makes wealth worth while;
Who lack it own not even what they have.

5. The lotus' stalk is just as long as water's depth;
So, too, men's height on inner power depends.

10. Firmness of soul is inward wealth;
    Who lack it are not men, but trees.

61. Unsluggishness

1. The unfailing light of dignity will flicker and will fade,
   When gloomy slothfulness comes near at hand.

5. For tardiness, forgetfulness, and sloth and sleep—
   These four are pleasure-boats of ruin grim.

62. Manliness

1. Never give up nor say: ''Tis much too hard';
   For strenuous effort strength to do will bring.

2. The world leaves those who've left unfinished tasks;
   So take care ne'er to leave a task undone.

7. 'The black-browed elder Sister dwells with sloth,' they say;
   The Lotus-maiden dwells in toil of slothless men.

9 Though by the very gods impossible it seem,
  Man's strenuous effort its due reward will win.

10. Who, undismayed, unwearyingly plod on,
    Will see the back of ancient Fate itself.

63. Hope in Trouble

1. When trouble comes, keep ever smiling on;
   There's nought like that to meet and conquer it.

2. A very flood of troubles will surely pass away
   When they are thought out well in wise men's minds.

3. Those, who in trouble still untroubled are,
   Will themselves surely trouble trouble sore.

5. Even though all at once to men sore troubles come,
   In fearless souls trouble itself will troubled be.

9. He, who in joy seeks not for joy,
   In grief real grief he will not find.

THE BODY POLITIC

64. The Minister

1. He for a minister is fit, who can combine
   Means, time and mode and act supreme.

2. Firmness, good rule, sound learning, manly deed—
   These, with the five above, a minister will need.

8. Though the king acts foolishly, and spurns the truth,
   Still to make known the right his minister should strive.

65. Power in Speech

1. Power of speech a great boon truly is:
   A boon indeed apart from other boons.

2. Both wealth and ruin upon this depend;
   So guard and cherish it from any lapse.

9. Who are not skilled few faultless words to speak,
   Are often keen to speak in many words.

66. Purity of Action

1. The boon of allies brings but worldly gain;
   The boon of pure deeds, every cherished thing.

10. Wealth and security through guile to seek
    Is pouring water into pots of unburnt clay.

67. Power in Action

1. Power in action is just power of will;
   Nought else should 'power in act' be called

4. For everyone 'tis easy just to talk;
   'Tis hard howe'er to act up to one's speech.

6. Men get just what they think and as they think,
   If steadfastly they go on thinking it.

7. Never look down on people for their size:
   For some are like great chariot's axle-pin.

68. Conduct of Affairs

2. Sleep on those things that slowly may be done;
   Sleep not on those that sleepless promptness need.

70. Conduct before Kings

1. Like men who warm themselves before a fire,
   Let those who stand 'fore kings be not too near and not too far.

76. The Acquisition of Wealth

7. The infant, kindliness, is born of love;
   'Tis nurtured by its foster-mother, wealth.

79. Friendship

3. A good book's charm is felt the more 'tis read;
   So with the friendship of the good, the more 'tis won.
6. Not the mere friendship of a smiling face,
   But that of smiling hearts is friendship true.
8. As hastes the hand to catch the slipping cloth,
   So hastes true friend to soothe another's grief.
9. Friendship's real throne is in the changeless heart:
   A sure support in every time of need.

81. Intimate Friendship

1. What then is friendship intimate?
   'Tis friendship that no liberty resents.

82. Bad Friendship

4. 'Tis better to be lonely than be friends with those
   Who, like untrainèd horses, their riders throw and gallop off.

84. Folly

1. This thing called 'Folly'—what is it indeed?
   'Tis grasping ruin, and rejecting wealth.

3. Shamelessness, listlessness, lovelessness, heedlessness—
 These are the four traits of foolish men.

10. The fool's intrusion in th' assembly of the wise
 Is like one placing dirty feet upon a lovely couch.

85. Stupidity

1. The poverty supreme is poverty of mind:
 The wise hold not wealth's lack as poverty.

4. Stupidity—ah! what is it?
 The pride that says, 'We are the wise.'

86. Enmity

2. Though others quarrels seek and do you wrong,
 'Tis best to do no ill and harbour no revenge.

4. If enmity, that ill of ills, decays,
 Then will arise best joy of all the joys.

10. All kinds of ill from ill-will do arise;
 From good-will comes the wealth of righteousness.

90. Disregard of the Great

1. Chief care of all should be to guard
 'Gainst disregarding might of mighty ones.

91. Obedience to Women

9. Those who act ever as the wife commands,
 Have neither virtue, wealth nor happiness.

93. Abstinence from Alcohol

2. O drink not liquor; but if drink you will,
 Know that you then will lose good men's esteem.

4. The maiden 'shame' will turn her back on those,
 Who the despisèd fault of drunkenness commit.

MISCELLANEOUS

96. Nobility of Birth

2. In three things men of noble birth ne'er fail:
   Virtue, truth-speaking and a sense of shame.

3. Four marks has true nobility, they say:
   A smile, a gift, kind speech and courtesy.

10. If a good name you wish, wish for a sense of shame;
    And if nobility, be humble towards all.

97. Honour or Izzat

2. Who wish for honour and for glory too,
   Mean deeds will never do, not e'en for glory's sake.

3. When prosperous, all men should humble be;
   And noble, too, in great adversity.

4. When from nobility men fall, they're spurned,
   As hairs that fall forgotten from the head.

9. A *yak* that's lost its tail cares not to live;
   So some for honour's sake will give their lives.

98. Greatness

1. Glory is his, who 's keen hard things to do;
   Disgrace is his, who meekly says, 'Without it I can live.'

2. In birth all men are quite alike;
   In worth they differ by their deeds.

3. The high-born, lacking high emprise, are base;
   The low-born, having high emprise, are great.

4. Greatness, like single-hearted wife,
   Belongs to him who guards himself.

8. Greatness is always lowly too;
   Meanness just plumes and boasts itself.

10. Greatness e'er hideth others' faults;
    Meanness just likes to shout them out.

99. Excellence of Character

2. Good character for great men is the good supreme;
   All other good is only good in name.

3. Love, kindness, graciousness, shame, truthfulness—
   On these five pillars doth worth's palace surely rest

5. The strong man's strength in lowliness is found;
   'Tis great men's weapon to subdue their foes.

7. If kindness you show not to evil-doers too,
   What value can there be e'en in your worthiness?

9. Who ne'er do change, though times may change,
   They shall be called 'Shore of the Sea of Worth.'

100. Courtesy

2. Sweet kindliness and high-born dignity—
   These two do form the path of courtesy.

7. Though boorish men may seem as sharp as files,
   Yet truly they are only wooden blocks.

9. Darkness broods o'er the whole wide world at noon
   For those who know not how to laugh.

10. The churlish person's ample wealth is spoilt,
   Like good milk poured into a dirty pot.

102. The Sense of Shame

1. To blush at evil deeds is proper shame;
   All else is like the blush of damsels fair.

5. Wise men will call 'The Home of Honour' those,
   Who for their own and others' sins feel shame.

6. The noble will e'en this wide world refuse to win,
   If they would have to overstep shame's barriers.

10. The deeds of men of shameless heart
   Like puppets are on strings, just apeing life.

103. Advancing One's Family

3. For God Himself will haste to help the man
   Who says: 'I must advance my house's weal.'

6. To seek the weal of one's own house
   Shows noble manliness in any man.

9. His body is a pot of trouble full,
   Who seeks to shield his house from every ill.

104. Farming

1. Roam where you will, the world must go behind the plough;
   Farming, though toilsome, is man's supreme employ.

2. The linch-pins of society the ploughmen are:
   Supporting other toilers all, who do not plough.

3. Who plough and eat do really live;
   The rest, as followers, just serve and eat.

8. Than ploughing e'en, 'tis better to manure;
   And weeding done, to watch is more than watering now.

9. If farmers quiet sit and go not to their land,
   'Twill sulk and take the huff, like sulking wife.

10. Old Mother Earth will laugh to see
    Men idling, saying: 'We have nought.'

107. The Fear of Begging

2. If it be true that men must beg to live,
   May the Creator, also, wander and be cursed!

5. E'en though it be but gruel and water pure,
   There's nought that's sweeter than the food of toil.

108. Vileness

3. The vile, maybe, are like the gods;
   They, too, just do as they desire.

10. Are vile men fit for anything?
    When trouble comes they quickly sell themselves.

LOVE

FURTIVE LOVE

110. Reading the Heart by Signs

1. Two are the looks of this damsel with dark eyes:
   One look gives pain, the other pain-balm is.

3. She looked, and looking, drooped her head;
   And so she watered love's young shoot.

4. I look at her, she looketh on the ground;
   I look away, she looks and shyly smiles.

10. When eye to eye doth speak with answering look,
    What need is there for any spoken words?

112. Praising Her Beauty

4. Could lotus see, 'twould bend and droop its head,
   And say: 'We'll ne'er be like this jewelled maiden's eyes.'

6. The stars e'en from their course do wander far,
   Not knowing which is moon and which the maiden's face.

113. Love's Excellence

2. The love between this maiden and myself
   Is close as is the bond of soul and flesh.

3. Begone, O image in the pupil of my eye!
   There's no room for the fair-browed damsel that I love.

10. My lover in my heart e'er joyfully abides;
    Though people say: 'He's gone, and loves her not.'

114. Giving up Secrecy

1. They, who've enjoyed love's bliss and now apart repine,
   Have nought left, save the palm-tree stalk to ride.

6. But thinking of my lass, my eyes refuse to sleep;
   I'll plan to ride the stalk in midnight hour.

MARRIED LOVE

116. The Pangs of Separation

9. Love burneth when my love is far away;
   Will fire so burn, or only at the touch?

129. Impatience for Reunion

6. When seeing him, no faults I ever see;
   Not seeing him, nought but his faults I see.

9. Love is more delicate than a flower;
   So few attain its perfect bliss.

131. Bouderie

2. *Bouderie* in love is just like salt:
   Too much of it is just like too much salt.

133. The Charm of Coyness

7. In lovers' quarrels, the loser always wins;
   When re-united this is surely seen.

10. In coyness is love's sweetness found;
    Its sweetness in the close embrace consists.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

EXPLANATORY NOTES

PART I—VIRTUE

Chapter 1

1. This may also be translated as follows:

> As letters all have 'A' as First,
> So to the world stands God, 'The First.'

The meaning of the translation in the text is that as all letters can only be pronounced with the help of a vowel, usually the vowel A, so the world exists because of God. It is quite likely that the poet has both meanings in mind. Compare *Bhagavad Gīta* 10 : 33—Aksharānām Akāro'smi—'Of letters I am the letter A.' See also Tāyumānavar, *Poruḷ Vaṇakkam* 12. அகரவுயி ரெழுத்தனைத்து மாகிவேறாகி — 'As the vowel A is in all letters and different from all.'

It is interesting that the term used for God in this stanza is the Sanskrit term *Bhagavan*—the Adorable One—the term used by the bhakti sects. It implies personality.

2. The phrase 'the feet of God' or 'His sacred feet' is commonly used in Hindu devotional poetry to signify 'the grace of God.'

3. Some commentators see in the phrase 'who comes to lotus-hearts' (மலர்மிசை யேகினான்) a reference to Arugan, the Jain deity, who is represented as standing on a lotus flower. It seems, however, to refer to the indwelling of God within the hearts of those who are devoted to Him.

Says Dr. Pope: 'It is the footfall of God that makes His creation rejoice and put forth its flowers, as it rests on each "spirit's folded bloom."'[1]

4. This couplet contains the Buddhist idea of the desirelessness of God. He alone is free from all desires.

5. 'The two dark deeds' refer to good and evil actions in the world, the result of self-love; both deeds are born of ignorance. 'Worthy praise' in Tamil is 'the praise

[1] *S.K.* p. 184.

that is allied to reality,' that truly knows God and the world.

6. Some commentators think that this refers to Arugan, and some refer it to Vishnu; for the name 'Victor over the Senses Five' is used of both.

7. The phrase 'to whom none is like' indicates the impossibility of expressing Him by any symbol.

8. The 'sea of this world' refers to the sea of births and deaths into which the soul is thrown from time to time.

The word used here for God is *anthaṇar*, (vide note on 3 : 10).[1]

9. The words translated 'our God Supreme' are literally, 'the one who has the eight qualities.' The commentator (Pari.) gives the eight qualities of God as follows: (1) Self-existence, (2) Pure essence, (3) Intuitive knowledge, (4) Omniscience, (5) Freedom from evil, (6) Graciousness, (7) Omnipotence, (8) Infinite bliss. Saivites claim that here the author refers to Śiva, who is called 'the god of eight qualities.'

According to Jainism the eight qualities are: (1) Infinite knowledge, (2) Infinite vision, (3) Infinite energy, (4) Infinite joy, (5) Indescribability, (6) Beginninglessness, (7) Agelessness, (8) Deathlessness.

Maṇakkuḍavar translates the second line: 'Is useless as a senseless doll.'

10. 'Clinging to the Lord's feet' signifies 'receiving the Divine grace.'

It is interesting to note the different names used by the author for God in this and in other chapters. They are as follows:

1. The First and the Adorable One. ஆதிபகவன் (1 : 1.)
2. The One who truly knows all. வாலறிவன் (1 : 2.)
3. The One who moves o'er the lotus flower (of the heart). மலர்மிசையேகினான் (1 : 3.)
4. The One without desire or disgust. வேண்டுதல் வேண்டாமையிலான் (1 : 4.)
5. The King or the Lord. இறைவன் (1 : 5, 10.)
6. The Destroyer of the gates of the five senses. பொறிவாயிலைந்த-வித்தான் (1 : 6.)
7. The One to whom there is no likeness. தனக்குவமையில்லாதான் (1:7.)
8. The Gracious One, who is an ocean of virtue. அறவாழியந்தணன் (1 : 8.)

[1] p. 72.

Dr. Pope paraphrases this as ‘Virtue's sea, the fair and loving One.’[1]

9. The One who has the eight qualities. எண்குணத்தான் (1 : 9.)
10. The One who holds to none. பற்றற்றான் (35 : 10.)
11. The Supreme Reality. செம்பொருள் (36 : 8.)
12. The True Refuge. சார்பு (36 : 9.)
13. The Creator of the world. உலகியற்றியான் (107 : 2.)

With the exception of Nos. 11 and 12, all the rest are personal names. Tiruvaḷḷuvar's idea of God is that of a personal Being, transcendent and infinitely great, yet in intimate touch with the world that He has created, and full of grace and truth. He is a present Helper in a time of trouble and One to whom the soul can surely cling in its quest for the higher life.

CHAPTER 2

The commentator, Parimēlaḷagar, explains the introduction of this chapter in this place as follows: ‘Rain is an ancillary cause for the existence of men and for the development of virtue, wealth and bliss, which give stability to the world.’ vide Acts 14 : 17 ; also *Bhagavad Gīta* 3 : 14.

Annād bhavanti bhūtāni ; parjanyād anna sambhavaha ;
Yajñād bhavati parjanyo ; yajñaha karma samudbhavaha.

From food creatures become ; from rain is the production of food ;
From sacrifice rain proceeds ; sacrifice ariseth from action.

1. The word used for ‘heavenly food’ is the Tamilized form of the Sanskrit word *amṛita*—ambrosia, the food of the gods.

2. The alliteration of this couplet is very interesting. It reads :

Thuppārkkut — thuppāya — thuppākkit — thuppārkkut
Thuppāya — thū-u maḷai.

5. This illustrates the incurable optimism of the Indian farmer and the sudden change in his fortunes produced by plenteous rain after a season of drought.

7. Maṇakkuḍavar translates the second line : ‘With lightning flash give not back again.’

[1] *S.K.* p. 187.

10. Parimēlaḷagar gives the following rendering for the second line: 'Without heaven's rain there is no water-flow.'

Chapter 3

The 'saint' is the *sannyāsī* who has renounced all worldly ties. 'Nowhere is the eclecticism of Tiruvaḷḷuvar more conspicuous than in this chapter,' says Dr. Pope.[1]

3. 'Both states' refers to life in this world and release in the next.

4. Ellis translates:

> As the hook rules the elephant, so he
> In wisdom firm his sensual organs rules,
> Who hopes to flourish in the soil of heaven.[2]

5. It is hardly likely that a Jain author would have referred to a story of Indra. The story referred to is that of the curse of Gautama Rishi upon the god for violating the chastity of his wife, Ahālya.

6. The thought here is implicit, 'the mean, even though they be ascetics.' Greatness is not in mere asceticism, but in asceticism plus character.

7. The thought is that as the mind can only know the world through the senses, so he who has a clear understanding of them, of their powers and effects, has a perfect comprehension of the world of phenomena.

8. The 'hidden words' of the sages are their *mantras*, which may be either of blessing or of cursing.

9. A Jain could hardly have written of 'wrath' in this way, which is quite foreign to his idea of sainthood.

10. The Tamil word *anthaṇar* is used for Brahmans, and the poet here cuts at the root of caste pride. The literal meaning of *anthaṇar* is 'those who possess gracious kindliness.'

Chapter 4

The commentator begins this chapter as follows: 'Because virtue (unlike wealth and bliss) results in the acquisition of the threefold bliss of the present life, of the next

[1] *S.K.* p. 192. [2] ibid. p. 194.

life and of final deliverance, the author declares its mighty power.'

The word translated 'Virtue' is not virtue in general but Dharma—that body of ethical principles which is the law of all life according to Indian philosophy.

1. *Siṛappu* (சிறப்பு)—the Tamil word translated 'eternal bliss' is meant to signify 'the final release.' 'Temporal wealth' refers to both 'earthly wealth' and the 'passing joys' of the intermediate heaven (*śvarga*), as distinguished from final deliverance.

6. *Nālaḍiyār*—a Jain collection of ethical verses of about the seventh century—has a verse which bears very closely upon this, translated by Dr. Pope as follows:

> Say not 'In after time we'll virtue learn; we're young.'
> While wealth is yours, conceal it not; do virtuous deeds.
> When evil tempests rage, not ripened fruits alone,
> But unripe fruits' fair promise falls.[1]

The 'undying help' refers to the help it will give in future births. Every deed carries forward its energy into another birth.

7. In the case of the bearer and the rider both, their present condition is determined by the deeds done in a former birth.

9. The commentaries refer the term 'good' or 'virtue' in this stanza to the virtue of domestic life or *illaṛam*, which is treated of in chapters 5–24.

Chapter 5

A new section of the book commences here, treating especially of Domestic Virtue, the first chapter being on home life or the domestic state, which is explained as 'the excellence of living in union with a wife.'

1. The 'three orders' referred to are the three orders outside the order of domestic life, namely, Brahmachāri, Vanaprasthan, Sannyāsī. These have to be supported by the householder (Gṛihasthan). The *Nālaḍiyār*, which was written about three centuries later, exalts the ascetic state over against the domestic state. See also *Manu* 3: 78.

[1] *S.K.* p. 198.

2. Three other classes are given in this verse. The service to the dead refers to the performance of the last rites.

3. Dr. Pope points out that this is almost a translation of *Manu* 3; 72.[1]

Pitris, the word used for 'ancestors' means 'the southern dwellers,' the ancient Hindu name for one's deceased ancestors.

4. The duty of hospitality, of sharing with passing guests, is one of the most important Hindu duties.

6. Here the poet distinctly declares the sufficiency and adequacy of home-life. If lived aright it is in no way inferior to the ascetic calling.

7. The 'strivers' are those who perform austerities for special blessings.

8. Domestic life, bearing its own sorrows and those of others, is as full of endurance as a life of ascetic austerity.

9. The poet hints at the hypocrisy and evil lives of many pseudo-ascetics. V.V.S. translates the second line 'and a good name is its ornament.'[2]

10. V.V.S. translates the second line: 'will be looked upon as a god among men.'[3]

Chapter 6

3. This is rendered by Maṇakkuḍavar and V.V.S.:

> What is poverty, if the wife hath worth?
> What is wealth, if she hath no worth?

5. The commentator explains by saying: 'Even the gods will obey such a wife.'

7. There is a play on words here by the poet. The Tamil word for prison is *siṟai* (சிறை) and that for chastity *niṟai* (நிறை). See also *Manu* 9: 12.

8. This couplet is a little obscure. The literal rendering is: 'If women win a husband, etc.'

Parimēlaḻagar explains it to mean: 'If wives really reverence their husbands', i.e. attain to reverence for their husbands.

[1] *S.K.* p. 201. [2] *V.V.S.* p. 14. [3] ibid. p. 54.

V.V.S. translates: 'Behold the woman who hath begotten a worthy son.'[1]

Beschi has: 'If the wife really gains her husband by being his true spouse,' which Dr. Pope also accepts.[2]

9. Ellis renders: 'Bold as a lion these dare never walk, etc.'[3]

10. Vēmana, the Telugu poet, quoted by Dr. Pope, has the following couplet on the same theme:

> Is wealth to wife or husband wealth ?
> Wealth of sons on earth is best.
> 'Tis wealth of wealth to live and side by side grow old.[4]

Dr. Pope suggests that the various legends concerning Vāśuki, Tiruvaḷḷuvar's wife, may have arisen from this chapter.[5]

Chapter 7

This chapter is one of the most charming in the whole book and shows the poet in his most homely mood.

1. Parimēlaḷagar makes this refer to sons alone, as he says: 'you can never say of *daughters* that they have won knowledge.'

2. The 'seven births' refer to birth into the world in seven different ways, namely: gods, men, quadrupeds, birds, reptiles, fish, and things without motion.

3. V.V.S. translates the second line: 'For they pass to him by their own acts all the merits that they acquire.'[6]

7. The assembly is 'the assembly of the learned.' 'He' in the second line refers to the 'son.'

8. Some render: 'sons wiser than themselves.'

9. Parimēlaḷagar says that the poet uses the word 'hearing' because the mother is incapable of judging of her son's learning; but this seems mere pedantry and somewhat far-fetched. It is the way of all mothers to rejoice when others praise their children. The poet simply shows here, as elsewhere, his knowledge of human nature, which remains very much the same to-day.

[1] ibid. p. 16. [2] *S.K.* p. 204. [3] ibid. p. 205. [4] ibid. p. 205. [5] ibid. p. 205. [6] *V.V.S.* p. 18.

10. Good sons are supposed to be the result of special penances and austerities.

Chapter 8

This is one of the finest chapters in the *Kural* and reveals the sterling character of the poet.

2. The commentator refers to the story of Śibi Chakravarti who gave up his flesh for the sake of the dove, pursued by the hunter.

3. The commentator says that this refers to the fruit of actions done in a former birth.

5. This refers especially to a life of love in the domestic state. It may be translated:

> They say the bliss of heaven the blessed have
> Is rooted in a loving life on earth.

6. Parimēlaḻagar explains this by saying: 'love is a help to get rid of evil.'

Maṇakkuḍavar says it is a help in the sense of 'doing evil for one we love.'

7. The sun's heat is supposed to scorch boneless insects.

8. There are two versions of this couplet. The generally accepted one is that given in the text, but another reads வன்பார்க்கண் 'on hard rock,' instead of 'on barren sand.' Both give a vivid picture of futility.

9. 'Outward means' refers to means such as time, place, servants, wealth, etc., or as some interpret it 'the different members of the body.'

Chapter 9

By the word 'guest' here is meant 'the passing stranger.' Hospitality has always been regarded as one of the most important duties of the Indian householder. Guests include wayfarers, mendicants and ascetics.

4. Lakshmī is the goddess of prosperity.

5. Making use of a hyperbole, the poet says that the very fields of a hospitable man will blossom into grain without any endeavour on his part.

6. The coming of one guest upon another does not worry him.

7. The word *vēḷvi* (வேள்வி), the equivalent of the Sanskrit *yajña*, is used for hospitality here, since it is regarded as one of the five great sacrifices.

8. The result of lack of hospitality is the loss of wealth.

10. The *anicham* flower is a fabled flower which is supposed to fade when one smells it.

CHAPTER 11

2. A timely help is of infinite value. Emerson's verse in *Merlin's Wisdom* is an appropriate commentary on this:

> The music that can deepest reach,
> And cure all ill, is cordial speech.

4. The millet seed and the palmyra nut are respectively the smallest and the biggest of seeds.

5. See 9 : 7.

8. See Vēmana, the Telugu poet (5 : 514):

> Forget the faults of others :
> But Vēma, ne'er on earth forget a benefit conferred.[1]

10. This stanza seems to be quoted in *Puṟanāṉūṟu* 34.[2]

CHAPTER 12

The title of this chapter is not easy to translate. Dr. Pope translates it as 'Impartiality.' The word itself means 'the middle attitude.' The commentator defines it as 'acting impartially to foes, neighbours and friends.'

5. The commentator says: 'Loss and gain come from actions in previous births, and realizing this, the wise man is not influenced in his actions by thoughts of loss and gain.' His mind is not 'warped' by such considerations. He always acts justly, disregarding the consequences to himself.

9. The word used here for 'fairness' is *seppam* (செப்பம்), 'rightness.'

[1] *S.K.* p. 215. [2] See p. 7.

The poet realizes that the mind is the final cause of fairness in both speech and act.

Chapter 13

Self-control is defined as 'the guarding of mind, body and speech from evil ways.'

1. 'Darkest night' refers to hell as the place of darkness.

5. Learning and wealth often lead to pride. So for men who possess these, humility is of peculiar excellence.

7. The alliteration of the Tamil here is very pleasing:

> Yākāvār āyinum nākākka ; kāvākkāl
> Sōkāppar sollilukkuppattu.

9. The word translated 'wound,' signifies 'a wound that always leaves a scar.'

Chapter 14

The Tamil word translated 'right conduct' is *olukkam* (ஒழுக்கம்). The commentator defines it as 'decorous life according to the rules of caste and order.' V.V.S. translates, 'purity of conduct,' and Dr. Pope, 'decorum.' The dharma of India emphasizes duty and obligation rather than rights, and each several class of men has its respective duties and obligations. 'Right conduct' is the fulfilling of these duties.

Chapter 15

The title of this chapter is 'Not coveting another's wife,' and its couplets scathingly rebuke the man who runs after his neighbour's wife.

Chapter 16

In this chapter Tiruvalluvar comes very close to the teaching of the Sermon on the Mount.

1. The picture of the earth bearing up its persecutors and actually giving them flowers and grain is a very suggestive one.

2. The phrase 'always,' 'at all times' is meant, says the

commentator, to emphasize the need of forgiveness and forbearance, even when one can punish without fear of reprisal.

6. The word translated 'overbearing' means 'resentful,' those who are always anxious to punish.

7. 'Suffering on their behalf' means 'suffering in compassion for the sorrow that comes to them as a result of the ill they do.'

8. See St. Paul's injunction—Romans 12 : 21.

CHAPTER 17

7. Lakshmī is the goddess of prosperity,[1] and her elder sister, Mūdēvī, is the goddess of adversity.

9. The commentator explains that in both cases these are the results of actions in former lives.

CHAPTER 18

Chapter 18 is on 'Not coveting.'

CHAPTER 21

2. The thought is as follows: 'Fire produces both good and evil; but evil causes only evil, and therefore must be dreaded more than fire.' There is a play on words here. The Tamil word for 'evil deeds' is *tīyavai* (தீயவை), and for 'fire' *tīyinum* (தீயினும்).

CHAPTER 22

The title for this chapter is *Oppuravaṟithal* (ஒப்புரவறிதல்) which means 'knowledge of one's duty to the world.' The commentator defines it as 'knowing the way of the world and acting accordingly.' Dr. Pope translates: 'the knowledge of what is befitting a man's position.' V.V.S. has 'complaisance' and another translator uses the word 'benevolence.' I think, on the whole 'beneficence' is as near as we can get.

1. Here the word used in the Tamil is different from the

[1] vide 9 : 4.

title, namely *kaḍappāḍu* (கடப்பாடு) or 'duty.' The idea is that men must give as the rain-clouds give.

Marcus Aurelius expressed the same thought: 'We ought to do good to others as simply and naturally as a horse runs, or a bee makes honey, or a vine bears grapes.'

2. The general thought of this stanza is that property should be acquired with a view to beneficence. Another translation of the last line of this verse reads: 'Is meant for doing good to worthy souls.'

5. Such a man gives to all according to their need and, though constantly giving, his wealth never fails.

7. The idea is that leaves, flowers, fruits and every part of the tree gives healing balm without fail. This reminds one of the trees 'whose leaves are for the healing of the nations.' (Revelation 22 : 2.)

10. The commentator says: 'Ruin that comes from beneficence is not ruin to that man.'

CHAPTER 23

The title of this chapter in the Tamil is simply 'Giving'; that is alms, or charity in the technical sense.

5. The might of asceticism is less than this might of charity among those in the domestic state.

8. The 'hard-eyed' are those who have no kindliness, the hard-hearted.

9. The meaning is that the hoarding up of wealth for selfish ends leads to more suffering to oneself than even begging, because one must eat in solitary state and without sharing with others.

10. It is better to die than to have to live without being able to give to the needy.

CHAPTER 24

This chapter has 'Praise' as its subject, the Praise or Fame that comes from doing good to others, while living in the domestic state.

Chapter 25

With Chapter 24, the first section on Domestic Virtue ends. The author now goes on to speak of the qualities of the ascetic state, and he begins with the distinctive virtue of kindliness or *ahiṁsā*, which is defined as 'love for all living things.' It is interesting that this kindly weaver-poet should put as first of the qualities necessary for the ascetic the spirit of kindliness. The word used for kindliness is *aruḷ* (அருள்) or grace. This is the word used for the 'Grace of God.' One is reminded of the hymn:

> For the love of God is broader than the measure of man's mind,
> And the heart of the Eternal is most wonderfully kind.

1. Any man can acquire worldly wealth, but only the noble can acquire the wealth of gracious kindliness.
2. Parimēlaḷagar observes that consideration has to be given by careful observation, by logical study of the results of actions, and by the study of the sacred books. By 'aid' is meant 'help for obtaining heavenly bliss' or 'a good environment in the next birth.' The thought is: 'All religions alike insist upon kindliness; therefore obtain the virtue of kindliness by practising it in various ways.'
8. Those who lack kindliness are utterly destitute, they can never have any true prosperity. Parimēlaḷagar observes that this stanza is intended to supplement the previous stanza, to show that riches cannot bring real joy even in this world.
9. Both things are impossible.
10. The ascetic must use his might with kindliness.

Chapter 26

Abstinence from flesh-eating is one of the duties of the ascetic. The commentator says that as flesh-eating involves killing, it is opposed to kindliness and so will not be indulged in by the man who has that grace. It is probable that Tiruvaḷḷuvar would apply this teaching to all men.

10. The Buddhists allowed a man to eat flesh provided he did not kill, but Tiruvaḷḷuvar pictures a fearful fate for the man who eats flesh, even when others kill.

Chapter 27

Tapas is hard to translate by one English word. It means 'the deliberate courting of bodily suffering with a view to the purification of the soul and the winning of the power of merit.' This is one of the characteristics of the ascetic. His body must be disciplined so as to be inured to pain and privation.

1. Even here the poet emphasizes the need of kindliness and ahiṁsā.

6. This stanza has been supposed to have special reference to the doctrine of the *Gīta* on the subject of *svadharma*. 'Better one's own dharma though destitute of merit, than the dharma of another.'[1]

The idea of the *Kural*, however, seems to be somewhat different from that of the *Gīta*. This stanza may be translated :

> Who perform tapas only their duty do ;
> Others all, caught in desire, their own ruin work.

Chapter 28

V.V.S. translates the title of this chapter as 'Imposture,' which clearly brings out the meaning. 'Hypocrisy' is also a good translation.

1. The five elements of which the body is composed—matter, water, fire, breath and air—are silent witnesses of the man's hypocrisy.

3. This is an example of one of the poet's pen-pictures, and of his pointed irony. Real asceticism gives power, but a hypocritical asceticism has only the appearance of power.

6. Renunciation must begin within or it is of no value.

9. We must not judge by appearances but by deeds.

10. The word here used for 'noble minds' really means 'the learned,' 'the excellent.' Dr. Pope points out that it corresponds to Aristotle's *phronimos*—'the prudent man.'[2]

Chapter 29

2. It is interesting to note the similarity here to the

[1] *B.G.* 3 : 35. [2] *S.K.* p. 237.

teaching of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5: 21–26).

3. The word used for riches means 'that which increases,' and so the contrast of ruin is emphasized by the irony.

Chapter 30

The ascetic must have the quality of truthfulness if he is to be a true ascetic. 'The two greatest causes of lying are lust and covetousness, both of which the ascetic has renounced,' says the commentator.

2. Says Parimēlaḷagar: 'If the result of lying is to save a life from evil or death then the conditions of this stanza are fulfilled.' The meaning of 'faultless good' is 'virtue.' Dr. Pope says that St. Paul bases truth-speaking upon the fact that men are members of one another, while Tiruvaḷḷuvar bases it upon the necessity of maintaining virtue.[1] It is possible that the poet in this stanza meant simply that falsehood cannot produce faultless good and so must never be indulged in. The commentator lived in a later age when casuistry had found means of evading the hard and simple duties.

3. Says Dr. Pope: 'Lie not in regard to that of which thy mind is conscious.'[2]

5. Says Beschi: 'It is easier to afflict the body and to give alms than to guard oneself from every falsehood'[3]

8. By 'outward purity' is meant 'bodily purity.'

9. Beschi translates: Non omnis splendor proprius est sapientis splendor; proprius ejus splendor est in oris integritate splendere.[4]

M. Ariel says: 'C'est la lumière (d'une bouche) qui ne ment pas.'[5]

10. Dr. Pope translates:

> Of all good things we've scanned with studious care,
> There's nought that can with truthfulness compare.[6]

[1] *S.K.* p. 239.
[2] ibid. p. 239.
[3] ibid. p. 239.
[4] ibid. p. 239.
[5] ibid. p. 339.
[6] ibid. p. 41.

Chapter 31

The control of anger is one of the distinctive Indian virtues, and the sage and ascetic must be especially careful in this matter, because of the power of their anger. See also *Kural* 2 : 9 for this.

1. It is most important to restrain one's anger on occasions when it can make itself felt.

4. Ascetics have no outward foes, but uncontrolled anger will be their inner foe.

6. Wrath is pictured as a burning brand flung into the ship of friendship, sailing over the sea of life. Not only does it destroy the man himself, but also those friends who could help him.

Chapter 32

Ahiṁsā—or refraining from causing pain to any living creature is another distinctive quality emphasized by Indian ethics. During recent years Mahatma Gandhi has done much to give to this ideal a modern setting.

1. By 'glory-giving wealth' is here meant the wealth of the eight *siddhis*—the magic-working powers to which ascetics attain.

By 'pure' is meant those who are purified from lust, anger and ignorance.

4. This reminds us of the injunction of St. Paul: 'If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him to drink; for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.' (Romans 12 : 20, 21.)

Dr. Pope quotes the saying of Buddha: 'Enmity never comes to an end through enmity here below; it comes to an end through non-enmity.'[1]

Chapter 33

This chapter deals with non-killing or 'respect for all life.' It forbids the sacrifice of any living creatures.

[1] *S.K.* p. 241.

CHAPTER 34

The impermanence of material things is one of the deep-seated convictions of Indian thought. The commentator says that it is only through the knowledge of the impermanence of earthly things that the soul can rid itself of the bond of earth and attain to freedom.

8. Some translate, 'The bird forsakes its nest or cage, etc.' Parimēlaḷagar discusses the rendering 'nest' for *kuḍambai* (குடம்பை) instead of 'shell' as follows:

> Now there are those who would explain *kuḍambai* as 'nest.' But as its origin is not contemporaneous with that of the bird, and as the bird goes into it again after leaving it, the reader will see that it cannot symbolize the body.[1]

It is related that there was a dispute between Parimēlaḷagar and Nachinārkkiniyār, as to whether the meaning here is 'cage' or 'egg.' During the course of the quarrel, Nachinārkkiniyār asked what difference it could make to the meaning of the couplet, Parimēlaḷagar replied that if the bird came out of the egg it could never get back, but the cage was always there.

CHAPTER 35

The preceding chapters are preparatory to this, and show the conditions under which true renunciation is possible. It includes the renunciation of both external and internal bonds.

1. V.V.S. translates: 'Whatsoever thing a man hath renounced, from the grief arising from that thing hath he liberated himself.'[2]

6. This stanza explains the ultimate renunciation of *ahaṅkāra* and *mammatā*, i.e. self-centredness and selfishness.

10. The alliteration of this verse is very telling:

> Paṟṟuka paṟṟaṟṟān paṟṟinai; appaṟṟai
> Paṟṟuka paṟṟu viḍaṟku.

Beschi quotes St. Augustine: 'Crescente caritate decrescit cupiditas.' When love increases, greed decreases.[3]

[1] *V.V.S.* p. 43. [2] ibid. p. 73. [3] *S.K.* p. 246.

CHAPTER 36

Knowledge of the truth follows upon complete renunciation. Evil is due to mental confusion.

2. 'Darkness' refers to the darkness that belongs to the round of birth and death. 'Bliss' refers to the bliss of complete release, moksha or salvation. The 'vision pure' is the vision of God, God-realization.

3. 'Doubts' refer to confusion of mind resulting from sensory knowledge. Men who have realized the truth are already near to the attainment of salvation—moksha.

4. To see God in all things and to realize Him in everything is the supreme wisdom.

8. The folly or ignorance that leads to birth is the *avidyā* which looks upon the material world as real.

9. V.V.S. translates: 'Behold the man who understandeth the means of his salvation and laboureth to conquer all attachments; the ills that he is yet to suffer depart from him.'[1]

The 'Real Refuge' is God, who upholds all things. The original makes it clear that the soul should live and walk in utter freedom from all other attachments.

CHAPTER 37

This chapter suggests that the poet had a close acquaintance with Buddhist lore.

2. V.V.S. translates: 'If thou must long for anything, long for freedom from reincarnation; and that freedom shall come to thee if thou long to conquer longing.'[2]

3. 'Here' refers to this life, and 'there' to the life of heaven. So in both worlds desirelessness is the supreme good.

4. In this couplet the word for heaven means 'purity.' The commentator explains that because heaven is free from ignorance and other ills, it is described by this word 'purity.' V.V.S. translates it 'purity.'[3]

5. As they are not free from desire they cannot be said to be wholly free.

[1] *V.V.S.* p. 76. [2] ibid. p. 77. [3] ibid. p. 77.

Chapter 38

The last chapter ends the section on Ascetic Virtue. The next chapter begins a new section on the Dharma of Property and Rule. In between is placed this chapter on *Karma* or Fate, which determines a man's career in this world.

• Beschi calls this chapter, 'the irrefragibility of the divine decrees.'[1]

The Tamil word *ūḻ* (ஊழ்) means 'the ancient Thing,' and denotes the latent force of old deeds, which determines the conditions in this present life.

4. Paṇḍit Vaḍivēlu Cheṭṭiār translates: 'There are through Fate two different natures in the world; hence the difference observable in men in their acquisition of wealth and in their attainment of knowledge; the deeds of a previous birth determine the characteristics of this birth.'

Sir S. Radhakrishnan has recently, in his *Hindu View of Life*, given a different connotation to Karma. He says: 'It supplies man with the material in the form of the past, but allows him the freedom to use the material in the light of his knowledge.'[2]

5. This stanza deals with the acquisition of wealth and the tricks of Karma in upsetting things. The words 'by Karma's tricks' are not found in the Tamil, but are supplied from the chapter heading in accordance with Indian convention.

10. Compare *Kural* 62: 10, where 'Old Karma' is said to give way before strenuous perseverance. This would bear out the idea of Sir S. Radhakrishnan. One is also reminded of Shakespeare:

> There's a destiny that shapes our ends,
> Rough-hew them how we will.

Ellis translates this stanza: 'What is more powerful than the destined effects of former works? It anticipates even thy thoughts while considering how to avoid it.'[3]

[1] *S.K.* p. 248. [2] *H.V.L.* p. 75. [3] *S.K.* p. 249.

PART II—PROPERTY

Chapter 39 begins a new section, which deals with the duties connected with property, wealth, authority and rule. In Sanskrit this is known as *Artha*, and the *Artha Śāstra* of Chāṇakya is the standard Sanskrit work on the subject. Chāṇakya, Kautilya or Vishṇugupta, as he is variously named, the Brahman minister of Chandragupta in the third century B.C., is regarded as the author of this work on Polity. This work, and the sections in the *Mahābhārata* on the *Dharma Śāstra* are the original authorities for political theory in India. As we have already mentioned in the Introduction, this section of the *Kural* shows clearly the author's knowledge of the *Artha Śāstra.* We shall explain the similarities in the notes on the different stanzas.

The section on Property is divided into three parts: namely, Kingship, chapters 39–63; Elements of a State, chapters 64–95; Appendix, chapters 96–108. While the first two parts are mainly concerned with the subjects indicated in the titles, there is a great deal in them of quite general application.

The seven Elements (*aṅga*) of the kingdom are given in the same order as in the *Artha Śāstra.* The king (chapters 39–63); ministers (chapters 64–73); territory (chapter 74); forts (chapter 75); the treasury (chapter 76); the army (chapters 77, 78); allies (chapters 79-83). Then follow twelve chapters concerning the principles of rule and behaviour in special cases, many of which are as important for the subjects as for the king or his ministers. The Appendix has reference to general morality in the whole body politic and to the right use of wealth.

CHAPTER 39

2. The characteristics enumerated in this stanza are appropriate not only to a king but to any man who seeks to make the best of life.

4. Dharma is the body of ethical truth which has been revealed in the *śruti* and the *smṛiti*, the code of conduct fitting to each man in his special position. The Tamil

word for this is *aṛam* (அறம்) which is used throughout the book, thus showing that the Tamils had their own code of ethics before the Aryans came with their distinctive culture. Adharma is the opposite of Dharma.

6. During the War, one of the Sikh soldiers, who was in England with his regiment and who had an opportunity at the time of the King's inspection of his regiment to talk to the King about his troubles, remarked, 'He is a good listener.' This is the highest praise that an Indian subject can give to his sovereign. The Hindu sovereigns always regarded an open audience to all who chose to come to see them as part of their royal duty. The late Maharaja of Travancore set aside an hour every morning when any person of whatever position could present to him a petition and state his grievances. The Moslem sovereigns of India followed the same practice. The whole of this chapter is reminiscent of *Manu Smṛiti*, chapter 7.

9. The second line refers to 'the acceptance of the minister's advice even when it is unpleasant to him.' The Tamil word rendered 'aegis' means literally 'umbrella,' which has always been a royal insignia in India.

Chapter 40

This chapter is applicable to all men and not only to the king. All the words used in connection with learning are pure Tamil words. *Kalvi* (கல்வி) is study, *kēḷvi* (கேள்வி) is oral instruction, and *aṛivu* (அறிவு) is knowledge or wisdom which comes from study and oral instruction.

5. This is a difficult stanza. V.V.S. translates: 'Though thou hast to humble thyself before the teacher, even as a beggar before a man of wealth, thou yet acquirest learning: it is those that refuse to learn that are the lowest among men.'[1] Reverence for the *guru* or teacher is a cardinal trait of Indian life, however high the position of the pupil may be.

6. In the dry and sandy *nallahs* or river beds of South India, where water flows perhaps for only a few days in the

[1] *V.V.S.* p. 85.

year, a little digging will always find water below the sand. Villagers often dig small holes in the sand of such water-courses and draw their supplies of water from this source. The deeper they dig, the more constant is the flow of water and the purer its quality.

7. This reminds one of the ballad of Kapilār in the *Puṛanāṉūṛu.* Kapilār in tradition is said to be the foster-brother of Tiruvaḷḷuvar.

> To us all towns are one, all men are kin,
> Life's good comes not from other's gift, nor ill;
> Man's pains and pain's relief are from within![1]

Chapter 41

3. Dr. Pope paraphrases the second line: 'If they only could gain the grace of modest self-effacement.'[2]

6. Brackish lands occur in many parts of India and are usually quite unfit for cultivation. Modern agricultural methods however have been able to drain such land and bring it into cultivation.

Dr. Pope says: 'They have the measurement of living beings.'[3]

Chapter 42

The usual method of instruction in ancient India was oral, from a guru or preceptor.

Says the commentator: 'Listening to the learned as they discourse on the śāstras.'

10. The word used here for 'men' is not the usual word, but one indicative of contempt.

Chapter 43

This chapter deals with the wisdom that comes through oral instruction and study.

2. It is a common Indian simile to compare the undisciplined mind to a restless monkey leaping from tree to tree.

3. This stanza gives an indication of the breadth and tolerance of our poet's mind.

[1] *T.A.* vol. I, 6, p. 45. [2] *S.K.* p. 252. [3] ibid. p. 253.

8. Dr. Pope happily translates:

> Folly meets fearful ills with fearless heart;
> 'To fear when cause of fear exists is wisdom's part.'[1]

'Fearful ills' includes anything which produces evil.

Chapter 44

V.V.S. translates this chapter-heading, 'Eschewing of faults.'[2]

3. The millet seed is one of the smallest of Indian seeds, while the palmyra seed is one of the largest.

6. Parimēlaḷagar writes: 'If the king, without first correcting his own faults, corrects those of others, he himself commits a fault thereby.'

Chapter 45

The commentator explains: 'The king who wishes to rule well and wisely will obtain the help of learned and noble men as ministers and spiritual guides.'

3. The idea of this stanza is abundantly illustrated by the experience of kings in all countries.

9. Dr. Pope translates the last line: 'Who lacks support of friends, knows no stability.'[3]

Chapter 46

While this chapter has primary reference to the king, its wider application to all is clear. The word translated 'friends' in the text really means 'company' and 'acquaintances,' and not friends of a more intimate kind.

2. V.V.S. translates: 'Water altereth and taketh the character of the soil through which it floweth: even so the mind taketh the colour of the company with which it consorteth.'[4]

This illustration is very vivid to those who have seen the rivers in flood time.

[1] *S.K.* p. 63.
[2] *V.S.S.* p. 63.
[3] *S.K.* p. 65.
[4] *V.V.S.* p. 97.

Chapter 48

Says the commentator: 'This refers to the careful survey of the four kinds of power, namely, the power of his own action, of his own strength, of the strength of the enemy and of the strength of the allies, both his own and the enemy's.' The first stanza of this chapter enumerates these four.

5. This is a happy way of putting the well-known proverb: 'Tis the last straw that breaks the camel's back.

6. By over-eagerness, combined with ignorance of his resources, the king comes to grief.

Chapters 49, 50

These chapters are concerned with action against the enemy and emphasize the necessity of the right choice of time and place if victory is to be gained.

The similes employed are very apt, and show the poet's keen observation of men and things. The crow was evidently as common in his day as it is to-day in India.

Chapter 51

The selection of ministers and the reposing of confidence in those selected is one of the most important aspects of kingship. A king's ability is more tested in this than in anything else.

1, This stanza is certainly reminiscent of *Artha Śāstra* I, chapter 6, where these four tests of loyalty, or *upadās*, as they are called in Sanskrit, are given in a similar form. The first test consists in an endeavour to shake the loyalty of the man to his sovereign by suggesting that the sovereign is not ruling according to dharma and should therefore be deposed. The second test consists in suggesting that another sovereign will reward his servants more generously and therefore the present king should be deposed. The third test is that of endeavouring to entangle him in the charms of fair ladies. The fourth test takes the form of an insidious suggestion that the king is about to order his death and that he should therefore strike first.

All the other stanzas in this chapter are closely connected with chapter 4 of the *Artha Śāstra*, referring to the various objections raised in the choice of ministers. Says Dr. Krishnaswāmy Aiyangār[1]: 'To any dispassionate reader the similarity of idea is quite clear, detail for detail, so that there is no reasonable doubt left that the author of the *Kural* had full knowledge of the *Artha Śāstra* and adopted several of its conclusions. It is to the credit of Tamil scholarship of an older age that this similarity had already been pointed out by a commentator who preceded Parimēlaḷagar in this work.'

Chapter 52

This chapter deals with the selection and employment of ministers.

3. 'Love' refers to loyalty; 'clarity' means clearness of mind and purpose; 'freedom from greed' is lack of any desire to profit by his position.

Chapter 53

This has as its subject, 'Cherishing one's kindred.' This is a very important duty in India, particularly when one attains a position of wealth and influence, and helps to explain the nepotism which is sometimes found among officials in India.

Chapter 54

The literal translation of this title is 'Unforgetfulness.' Dr. Pope describes it as 'the absence of that giddiness or thoughtlessness which characterizes the state of mind of worldly people.'[2]

The commentator explains: 'Never to forget the duty of guarding oneself and the necessity of keeping off enemies especially in times of peace and prosperity.'

[1] *Some Contributions of South India to Indian Culture*, pp. 127, 128.

[2] *S.K.* p. 77.

10. Dr. Pope translates:

> 'Tis easy what thou hast in mind to gain,
> If what thou hast in mind thy mind retain.[1]

Chapter 55

The title may be translated 'Rectitude of Rule,' or as Ellis translates: 'The Uprightness of the Sceptre.'[2]

6. Ellis translates: 'It is not the lance which giveth victory to a king, but his sceptre (the symbol of justice) if it never deviate from right.'[3]

Chapter 56

This chapter deals with 'Unjust rule' or 'The crooked sceptre,' as the Tamil literally reads.

Chapter 57

This is concerned with harshness or terrorism, the 'cruel sceptre,' as it is called in one of the stanzas.

Chapter 58

This chapter naturally follows on the previous chapter against harshness, and sets forth the positive quality of graciousness. The literal meaning of the Tamil word is 'the running of the eyes,' and it refers to the 'gracious glance' of the king upon those who come to him with petitions.

While this and the following chapter have especial reference to the king's actions, they have also a much wider application to all men in responsible positions.

1. The quality of graciousness is a natural quality for a true king. The poet pictures it as a beautiful maiden.

5. Dr. Pope translates:

> Benignity is eyes' adorning grace:
> Without it eyes are wounds disfiguring face.[4]

The Tamil word for 'sore' alliterates with 'eye,' namely *puṇ* and *kaṇ*.

[1] *S.K.* p. 77. [2] ibid. p. 266. [3] ibid. p. 266. [4] ibid. p. 81.

CHAPTER 59

This deals with the employment of spies and follows closely the lines of the *Artha Śāstra.*

CHAPTER 60

This and the following chapters show the strong and manly soul of this poet-weaver of Mayilāpūr, a man born and brought up in low estate, but able to reach to a height of nobility by the manliness of his character and the sanity of his outlook.

1. Dr. Pope translates:

> 'Tis energy gives men o'er that they own a true control;
> They nothing own who own not energy of soul.[1]

This reminds one of Jesus' Parable of the Talents and the man who hid his talent in the earth. 'For unto everyone that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not, even that which he hath shall be taken away.' (Matthew 25 : 29.)

5. The lotus in the tank always floats on the surface, and its stalk adjusts itself to the depth of the water. This is another of our poet's delightful pen-pictures.

Dr. Pope quotes Robinson's translation:

> The water's depth's the lily's length;
> The height of man's his mental strength.[2]

10. The commentator defines 'firmness of soul' as 'enduring knowledge.'

CHAPTER 61

The commentator explains the title as 'the absence of sloth in regard to the doing of those things intended.'

1. The Tamil word (மாசு) here translated 'gloomy,' means 'darkness' or 'stain.' The commentator says it refers to the *tāmasa* quality, which is said to be dark. The word 'dignity' refers to the 'dignity of noble birth.'

5. The compound word '*kāmakkalan*' (காமக்கலன்) may

[1] *S.K.* p. 83. [2] ibid. p. 271.

mean either 'delightful ship' or 'delightful ornament.' Some commentators adopt one meaning and some another. Beschi adopts the translation 'ornament.'[1]

V.V.S. translates the second line: 'Are the cosy pleasure-boats that are fated to perish.'[2] Here again there is a difference of interpretation as regards the word *kēḍunīrār* (கேடுநீரார்) which may mean either 'pertaining to the waters of destruction,' or 'whose fate is destruction.' The translation we have adopted retains the ambiguity of the original.

CHAPTER 62

This is a chapter full of most sturdy common sense. The title (ஆள்வினை) is explained by the commentator as signifying 'continually exerting oneself.'

1. Vaḍivēlu Chettiār translates: 'Yield not to the feebleness which says, "This is too difficult to be done"; labour will give the greatness of mind which is necessary to do it.'

Dr. Pope translates the second line: 'For strenuous effort gives prevailing power.'[3]

7. The 'black-browed elder Sister' is Mūdēvī, the goddess of misfortune; the Lotus-maiden is Lakshmī or Padmā, said to have been born in a lotus, the goddess of prosperity, and regarded as the younger sister of Mūdēvī.

9. Dr. Pope translates:

> Though Fate divine should make your labour vain;
> Effort its labour's sure reward will gain.[4]

The idea is that even though the force of Karma is all working against you, persistent effort will overcome this opposition.

10. This verse should be compared with chapter 38: 10, in which the poet emphasizes the irresistible force of Karma. Even Karma has to give way before steady and persistent exertion. The story of Satyavān and Śāvitri is a good example of this. The persistence of Śāvitri conquered even Fate.

[1] *S.K.* p. 272. [2] *V.V.S.* p. 127. [3] *S.K.* p. 56. [4] ibid. p. 87.

'To see the back of Karma' is to see it retreating in defeat. One is reminded of W. E. Henley's couplet:

> I am the master of my fate;
> I am the captain of my soul.

CHAPTER 63

The commentator explains the title as signifying, 'Refusal to be discouraged in spite of obstacles due to gods, bodily pain or lack of means.' Drew translates: 'Against losing energy in difficulty.'[1]

1. This has quite a modern ring and reminds one of the favourite song of the British soldier:

> Pack up your troubles in your old kit-bag
> And smile! smile! smile!

2. Dr. Pope explains: 'Troubles are imaginary: try to grasp them in thought, and they vanish.'[2]

3. The Tamil is interesting and we have tried to reproduce here the multiplication of similar sounds.

> Idumbaik—kidumbai paduppar, idumbaik—
> Kidumbai padā—athavar.

The second line shows an instance of what is called *uyiraḷapeḍai* (உயிரளபெடை) or vowel-elongation for the sake of metre, a common device in ancient Tamil poetry.

5. V.V.S. translates: 'Behold the man whose heart sinketh not even at a whole host of troubles arrayed against him; the obstacles in his path have themselves met with an obstacle.'[3]

9. Dr. Pope translates:

> Mid joys he yields not heart to joy's control,
> Mid sorrows, sorrow cannot touch his soul.[4]

The idea behind this stanza is that of the supreme value of detachment of mind, which accepts joy or grief without emotion as they come.

[1] *S.K.* p. 274.
[2] ibid. p. 274.
[3] *V.V.S.* p. 131.
[4] *S.K.* p. 88.

CHAPTER 64

A new sub-section is commenced here entitled 'The elements of the State.' The first of these is 'The ministry.' It was the custom in India for the king to rule through ministers appointed by him in different departments. Says the *Artha Śāstra*: 'Sovereignty is only possible with assistance. A single wheel can never move. Hence he shall employ ministers and hear their opinion.' The Choḷa administration in the Tamil land in the tenth century A.C. had a regular body of ministers to advise the king.

1. The 'means' are two-fold: money and men, or wealth and the army. The 'mode' refers to the tactics and methods to be employed to overcome difficulties; with the two-fold means this makes five things to be employed, as referred to in the next stanza.

2. Beschi translates: 'Together with the former five qualities the minister should excel in firmness of mind, in love towards his subjects, in practical knowledge of right and in indefatigable diligence.'[1]

CHAPTER 65

Beschi translates the title: 'Speech which has the power of persuasion.'[2]

9. Beschi neatly translates this: 'Asiatice loqui affectant, qui pure et laconice loqui nesciunt.'[3]

CHAPTER 66

The phrase 'every cherished thing' includes, says the commentator, 'virtue, wealth and joy in this world and bliss in the world to come.'

10. Vaḍivēlu Cheṭṭiār translates: 'For a minister to protect his king with wealth obtained by foul means is like preserving a vessel of unbaked clay by filling it with water.' As everyone knows, the unbaked clay will be at once dissolved by the action of the water.

[1] *S.K.* p. 275. [2] ibid. p. 276. [3] ibid. p. 276.

Chapter 67

The commentator explains the title as meaning 'that strength of mind which effects one's purpose.'

1. By 'nought else' the poet refers to the various external powers of the king—the army, forts, alliances, etc.

4. Dr. Pope compares this with the Sanskrit couplet in the *Hitopadeśa* 3 : 107.

> Paropadeśe pāṇḍityam sarveshām sukaram nṛṇām :
> Dharme sveyamanushthānam kasyachit tu mahātmanaḥ.[1]

'It is easy for all to show their learning in instructing others ; but it is only the great who can follow out their own dharma.'

7. Dr. Pope translates :

> Despise not men of modest bearing ;
> Look not at form, but what men are :
> For some there live, high functions sharing,
> Like linch-pin of the mighty car.[2]

Chapters 68–78

These chapters take up various subjects which are of importance from the point of view of the welfare of the State. Chapter 69 gives the qualifications of the ambassador or envoy ; chapter 70 deals with the minister's conduct before the king ; chapter 71 has as its subject the knowledge of a king's thoughts by noting his looks ; chapter 72, knowledge of the council ; chapter 73, self-confidence in the council ; chapter 76, the acquisition of wealth ; chapter 77, the excellence of the army ; and chapter 78, military courage. We have only been able to include a few stanzas from these chapters though they contain much shrewd observation, in addition to a good deal of material common to all works on polity.

Chapters 79–83

These chapters deal with friendship or alliances. They have primary application to the alliances of kings and ministers, but many of the stanzas are of universal application to men in general.

[1] *S.K.* p. 278. [2] ibid. p. 93.

79: 6. Ellis translates: 'True friendship is not that which dimpleth the face with smiles; but that which makes the heart rejoice.'[1]

79: 8. This refers to the cloth worn by the ordinary man in the Tamil country which is just gathered around the waist and tucked in and which sometimes has a way of slipping down.

Chapter 80 is on 'testing of fitness for friendship.' The title of chapter 81 may also be translated, 'Old and tried friendship.'

82: 4. This gives a good example of the conciseness of the couplets in the *Kural*. The original consists only of four compound words and three simple words. It may be literally translated as follows:

> On-battlefield throws-and-leaves untrained-horse those-like
> Than-in-society-of solitude best.

Chapter 83 is on 'False friendship.'

Chapters 84–95

These chapters take up various aspects of State polity in relation to different classes. We have only selected a few of the more important stanzas. Here again the general application of many of the ideas will be noticed.

Chapter 87 is on the 'glory of enmity'; chapter 88 on the necessity of estimating the quality of the foe; chapter 89 on internal foes; chapter 92 on prostitutes; chapter 94 on gambling; and chapter 95 on medical treatment.

The commentator suggests that chapters 88–94 point to those whose friendship should be shunned.

84: 3. The four despicable qualities are given in this stanza. 'Heedlessness' is 'speaking or acting without consideration.'

Chapter 91 illustrates the power of the king's harem in the rule of a state. V.V.S. uses the term 'petticoat government.' The intrigues of the zenana are referred to.

Babar's memoirs afford a good example of the evil of drinking among kings and ministers.

[1] *S.K.* p. 291.

93: 1. Probably the Tamil word for liquor here, while technically confined to the fermented juice of the palm, is meant to cover all kinds of alcoholic liquor.

CHAPTER 96

This chapter begins a new section which deals with various questions that are connected with ethics in general and have also a special relation to property and kingship. Tiruvaḷḷuvar thinks a great deal of noble birth, but it is not noble birth in the sense of high caste of which he is thinking, but distinguished family. Ariel translates by *noblesse*.

2. The Tamil word (நாணம்) may mean either 'modesty' or 'shame.' Here it is used for that sense of shame which is hurt by any evil deed or by failing to do a good one. It is the French *amour propre*.

3. V.V.S. translates: 'Four are the attributes of a gentleman—a smiling face, a liberal hand, sweetness of speech, and condescension.'[1]

He uses the word 'condescension' in its good sense of 'never despising anyone, however mean.' 'They say' means always 'the wise say.'

CHAPTER 97

Honour, or '*Izzat*,' as it is called in Northern India, is a most precious possession to every Indian. It accounts for many Indian traits. Death is better than dishonour. The commentator explains the thought as 'Never degrading oneself and giving one's life, if degradation comes through divine agency.'

9. The yak, the wild buffalo of the northern hills, whose glory is its magnificent tail, is said to pine away and die if it loses its tail. The commentator says: 'Even the loss of one hair of its tail is enough to make it seek death rather than to live on in dishonour.'

It is interesting to note how this conventional simile has found its way through Sanskrit to the Tamil lands, where the yak is never seen.

[1] *V.V.S.* p. 197.

Chapter 98

The title of the chapter means 'greatness of mind or character.'

2. This verse shows the poet's attitude to caste. Birth in a particular group means nothing in itself.

4. V.V.S. translates: 'Even as chastity in a woman, greatness can be maintained only by being true to one's own self.'[1]

8. V.V.S. translates: 'Greatness is ever unpretending and modest; but littleness vaunts its merits before the world.'[2]

Chapter 99

Says Dr. Pope: 'This noble chapter might be illustrated by quotations from all quarters.' He translates the title as 'Fulness of Excellence.' (Greek, *teleiotes.*)[3]

2. The meaning is that inward wealth of character is the important thing and all outward wealth, whether of bodily figure or of property, is of secondary importance.

7. This reminds one of the saying of Jesus: 'For if ye love them that love you, what reward have ye?' (Matthew 5: 46.)

9. Age (*yugam*) succeeds age, each changing in character, but the perfected ones will never change even if the whole constitution of the world be changed. Such people are in their character the very crown of worth (சால்பு) because it cannot go beyond that.

Chapter 100

Says Dr. Pope: 'This is the crown of greatness; a mingling of unaffected kindness with consummate tact. It harmonizes all things, while it is the result of a happy and harmonious combination of good qualities.'[4]

[1] *V.V.S.* p. 201.
[2] ibid. p. 202.
[3] *S.K.* p. 311.
[4] ibid. p. 312.

9. Dr. Pope translates:

To him who knows not how to smile in kindly mirth,
Darkness in daytime broods o'er all the vast and mighty earth.[1]

CHAPTER 101

This is on 'Unprofitable wealth,' or 'Wealth without beneficence.' It satirizes the wealthy who never give.

CHAPTER 102

Dr. Pope suggests that the idea of this chapter is what we should call 'Conscience.'[2]

1. The blush of bashfulness and the blush of conscience are two very different things.

6. The poet speaks of 'the hedge or barrier of shame,' which the great ones refuse to step over in order to win the world's prizes.

V.V.S. translates: 'The worthy refuse to acquire even kingdoms save by means for which they will not have to blush.'[3]

This is a long way from the doctrine of the *Artha Śāstra*, 'that the plea of public interest is quite sufficient to justify immoral actions.'[4]

10. The Tamil has a play on the words 'shame' (*nāṇam*) and 'string' (*nāṇ*) which cannot be brought out in English.

CHAPTER 103

This chapter takes us back into the heart of Indian life, to the duty of every man to do all he can for his family. Family responsibility is a fundamental principle of Indian ethics and explains many things in Indian life which Westerners fail to understand. Some observers regret that to-day the Western ideal of individualism is breaking down this sense of family responsibility.

[1] *S.K.* p. 136. [2] ibid. p. 314. [3] *V.V.S.* p. 210.
[4] See Ghosal, *Hindu Political Theories*, p. 150.

3. This is our poet's version of the old saying: Heaven helps those who help themselves.

The literal translation of the Tamil is 'God will gird up his loins,' i.e. fasten his cloth so as to proceed quickly.

6. The commentator points out that the epithet 'virtuous' distinguishes this kind of manliness from the manliness shown in battle.

9. Says V.V.S.: 'The poet pities the uncomplaining patience with which the good man bears every burden.'[1]

Dr. Pope translates:

> The breadwinner must be content to bear the burthen:
> The labour we delight in physicks pain.[2]

Chapter 104

Agriculture has always been the basic industry ot India and must always remain so. At least nine-tenths of the people of India depend on the work of the farmer. This chapter, as chapter 2 on Rain, shows the poet's realism.

1. As the plough is the symbol of agriculture, the sage uses ploughing as synonymous with farming. This stanza and those that follow suggest that the poet disputes the Brahmanical theory of Manu that the farmer is one of the lower castes.

2. The linch-pin is one of the most important pieces of the bullock cart. It was the custom of thieves to take out the linch-pins from the axle and so bring the cart to the ground. The linch-pin holds the wheel in its place on the axle. 'Not much esteemed, but indispensable,' says Dr. Pope.[3]

3. This is an oft-quoted couplet.

8. Tiruvaḷḷuvar knows from experience the needs of farming. One of the great problems of the Indian farmer, on which the Agricultural Departments have bestowed a great deal of time and attention, is that of manuring. The Indian farmer has old traditions of manuring the land.

9. The farmer's life in all countries is one of daily toil, and the work demands continual attention.

[1] *V.V.S.* p. 212. [2] *S.K.* p. 315. [3] ibid. p. 316.

Chapters 105–108

Chapter 105 has as its subject 'Poverty,' that close companion of the majority of India's people. Dr. Pope suggests that this chapter shows a very bitter experience of poverty in the author's mind.[1]

Chapters 106 and 107 deal with 'Begging' and 'The Fear of Begging.' India is the land of beggars, more than five millions of her people being beggars by profession. Tiruvaḷḷuvar does not look upon begging as an honourable occupation. The former chapter shows a certain sympathy with the beggar, when his condition is a result of difficulties over which he has no control, but chapter 107 condemns begging wholesale.

The idea of 107 : 2 is expressed by Dr. Pope as follows :

> Brahma, the Creator, never made men to be beggars.
> It cannot be a part of religion.[2]

Chapter 108 is on 'Vileness,' the lowest life of all, the very opposite of all that has been pictured as the ideal character.

108 : 3. This of course is ironical, and is a very neat example of the poet's cutting irony.

PART III—LOVE

This last book deals with 'Passion,' the passionate love of youth and maid, man and wife, and its joys and pains, both physical and spiritual. Says Dr. Pope : 'These chapters are worthy of Theocritus.'[3] It may be called the Tamil *Song of Solomon*. There are here no vulgarity nor salacious details, though there is both frankness and charm. Chapters 109 to 115 deal with the passion of a youth and maid before their marriage, or as it is called the *Gāndharva* form of marriage, in which the two agree to go off into the jungle and live together without any ceremony. Chapters 116 to 133 treat of the life of husband and wife, including the pain of separation, the value of coyness and the pangs of jealousy.

[1] *S.K.* p. 317. [2] ibid. p. 319. [3] ibid. p. 322,

As Dr. Pope says: 'It is an Eastern romance, not fully told, but indicated in a number of beautiful verses, which leave much to the imagination of the reader.'[1]

We have just selected a few of the choicest stanzas for translation.

A great many of the chapters are either soliloquies by one or both of the lovers, or dialogues between the two.

CHAPTERS 109–112

Chapter 109 describes 'the mental disturbance caused by the beauty of the fair lady,' and it also describes her various charms. It is supposed to be the discourse of the lover either to his beloved or to her maid.

Chapter 110 pictures in a charming way the various indications by which the lover comes to know that the lady returns his love. These stanzas also are supposed to be said by the lover to her maid or to a friend.

1. 'Dark-eyed' means stained with henna or some other composition. Compare Shakespeare, *Venus and Adonis*: 'For looks kill love and love by looks reviveth.'

10. Kambar's *Rāmāyaṇa* in Tamil has a delightful illustration of this in connection with the first meeting of Śri Rāma and Sīta:

> எண்ணரு நலத்தினாள் இனைய நின்றுழி
> கண்ணொடு கண்ணிணை கௌவி யொன்றையொன்-று
> உண்ணவு நிலைபெறா துணர்வு மொன்றிட
> அண்ணலு நோக்கினான் அவளு நோக்கினாள்.[2]

> So stood that maiden of rare loveliness,
> And eye caught eye and each the other ate;
> As quiet they stood, minds into one were fused;
> The hero looked at her and Sīta looked at him.

Chapter 111 is entitled 'Rejoicing in the loving embrace,' and Chapter 112 'The praise of her beauty.' This chapter consists of hyperbolic couplets praising the beauty of the beloved. I have just selected two as good examples of the style.

[1] *S.K.* p. 322. [2] *Rāmāyaṇa* I: 11: 36.

Chapters 113–115

It must be remembered that these chapters speak of secret passion, when there is no actual ceremony of marriage. So rumour gets busy, as all that happens in any Indian village is soon known far and wide. The lovers find that if they want to see much of each other, they must make known their love and have the proper ceremonies performed. In order to do this the lover is brought into the village in the dead of night astride a palmyra stalk. He bewails the separation from his bride, proclaims the union and defies all rivals. Then follows the regular ceremony.

Chapter 114 particularly refers to this custom.

Chapter 115 expresses the feelings of the bride and bridegroom when the village is full of the news.

Chapters 116–133

These chapters are concerned with various aspects of the love between husband and wife. They refer to the married state and not to any clandestine attachment. Chapters 116 to 128 are connected with the separation of the two lovers and the longings and difficulties of separation.

Chapter 129 suggests that the lovers are reunited.

Chapter 130 suggests that there has been some misunderstanding between them.

Chapters 131 to 133 speak in a very happy way about the kittenish playfulness of love and its resultant joy.

Chapter 129: 9. The extreme delicacy of love in its physical and mental aspects is emphasized today by both physiologists and psychologists. It is necessary therefore that a delicate refinement should prevail between the lovers.

Chapter 131. *Bouderie* is 'playful pouting.' The word 'bouderie' is taken from the French translations and seems to express the original better than any English word. Our poet was a very human soul after all and knew life as it was, as well as how it should be. He treats of this whole subject with a charming delicacy.

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Tradition has it that there were ten commentaries on the *Kural* in mediæval times. Of these only two have hitherto been brought to light, those by Maṇakkuḍavar and Parimēlaḻagar. The latter lived and taught at Kāñchī, or Conjeeveram as it is now called, about 600 years ago. He was a Brahman scholar and his commentary has been the authoritative commentary on the *Kural* for the past six centuries. His style is almost as terse and vigorous as the original, and students of the *Kural* are greatly indebted to him for his clear and convincing exposition of the couplets. His criticisms of the various readings and meanings current in his day are incisive and dignified.

The commentary of Maṇakkuḍavar has only recently come to light through the industry and research of Srīmān K. Ponnuswāmi Nāṭṭar, and was published by him in 1925. In a number of places his text differs from that of Parimēlaḻagar and he often adopts a different rendering of the same text. Some of these differences have been referred to in the notes. The edition of Maṇakkuḍavar often alters the order of the stanzas in the chapter.

In this book the order of the edition of Parimēlaḻagar has been adopted throughout.

The remaining commentaries are lost to us, though possibly some of them may be discovered one day, as that of Maṇakkuḍavar has been.

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SYSTEM OF TRANSLITERATION AND PRONUNCIATION OF TAMIL LETTERS

VOWELS

Tamil	Sanskrit	Transliter-ation	Pronunciation (approximate)
அ	अ	a	u in punch
ஆ	आ	ā	ā in father
இ	इ	i	i in sit
ஈ	ई	ī	ī in clique
உ	उ	u	u in full
ஊ	ऊ	ū	ū in rule
எ	—	e	e in fed
ஏ	ए	ē	ai in main
ஐ	ऐ	ai	ai in aisle, but much shorter
ஒ	—	o	o in mobility
ஓ	ओ	ō	ō in noble
ஔ	औ	au	ow in cow

CONSONANTS

N.B.—The Tamil alphabet is not fully phonetic, as are the Sanskrit and the other Dravidian alphabets. Several letters indicate different sounds in different positions.

Tamil	1. When mute 2. In the beginning of a word 3. After a hard consonant	After a soft consonant	In other places	Remarks
க்	k (क्)	g (ग्)	h (ह्)	Guttural.
ச்	ch (च्)	j (ज्)	s (स्)	This is pronounced as a *palatal* sibilant.
ட்		ḍ (ड्)	ḍ	Cerebral, far back in the palate.
த்	t (त्)	d (द्)	th	Dental purer than English dentals.
ப்	p (प्)	b (ब्)	p	Labial.

Tamil	Sanskrit	Translitera-tion	Pronunciation (approximate)	Remarks
ங்	ङ्	ṅ (before g)	n in singing	Guttural n
ஞ்	ञ्	ñ	n in ginger	Palatal n
ண்	ण्	ṇ	n stopped as far back as possible	Cerebral n
ந் & ன்	न्	n	as in English	
ம்	म्	m	as in English	
ய்	य्	y	as in English	
ர்	र	r	as in English (when soft)	
ல்	ल्	l	as in English	
வ்	व्	v	as in English, but not so firm	
ழ்	—	ḻ	r pronounced with the tongue as far back in the throat as possible.	Peculiar to Tamil
ற்	—	ṟ	a rolling r; before a hard consonant—t	
ள்	ळ्	ḷ	l pronounced by the palate	Palatal l

SANSKRIT WORDS

Sanskrit words, unless they have beome modified by long Tamil usage, are transliterated according to Sanskrit pronunciation, on the system used in other books in this series, the Sanskrit alphabet being represented as follows:

क	k	ख	kh	ग	g	घ	gh	ङ	ṅ
च	ch	छ	chh	ज	j	झ	jh	ञ	ñ
ट	ṭ	ठ	ṭh	ड	ḍ	ढ	ḍh	ण	ṇ
त	t	थ	th	द्	d	ध	dh	न	n
प	p	फ	ph	ब	b	भ	bh	म	m
य	y	र	r	ल	l	व	v		
श	ś	ष	sh	स	s	ह	h		
ऋ	ṛi	ं	ṁ	ः	ḥ				

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